

Інформація

Адреса змісту:[https://www.fanfiction.net/s/13893841/153/A-Magical-](https://www.fanfiction.net/s/13893841/153/A-Magical-Journey)

Journey

Книги

>

Гарри Поттер

Волшебное путешествие

Автор:

FictionOnlyReader

Следуйте за Куинном Уэстом в его волшебном путешествии, который попадает в мир Гарри Поттера, но является ли мир, в который он попал, таким же, как тот, о котором он когда-то читал? Сможет ли он найти свой путь в этом новом мире? Сможет ли он когда-нибудь почувствовать себя здесь своим? Какую возможность предоставит ему магия этого мира? Прочтите, чтобы узнать...

[Реинкарнация] [SI OC] [Поздний роман]

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221. Chapter 221: Respectfully

Suggesting

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"Where were you?" asked Eddie in a rushed whisper as soon as Quinn sat down beside him in the Defense Against The Dark Arts classroom. "I spent half an hour in the morning running around in the grounds looking for you."

"I got busy last night and didn't return to the dorm," said Quinn back in a whisper. Quinn grabbed his shoulder and stretched his neck, "Ugh, my neck hurts. . . all-nighters are seriously not my scene," he grimaced a bit, "should've conjured a chair or something."

"What were you doing exactly?" asked Marcus.

Quinn sighed tiredly, "Solving a puzzle. . . a massive troublesome puzzle with a clock on it."

Umbridge, who had finally calmed herself down from broken expectations and fantastical dreams, entered the classroom, and the class went mum-silent as she preferred in her classroom. Eddie and Marcus also left Quinn alone, took out their books, and started reading the book without Umbridge's prompt.

Quinn, also for once, took out his book and began pretending to read it. He needed some quiet and peace to nurse his throbbing head — it was killing him. He used thought acceleration to cut down on time to solve the needlessly long mechanism for the last three mechanisms.

'That damned Stigweard Gragg! The sheer nerve to lock me inside there,' thought Quinn while cursing the Architect, but he stopped and squeezed his eyes shut because his head hurt harder.

While he was able to barely get out on time, and the thought acceleration gambit had worked, it wasn't a complete success.

. . .

- [Back inside to Architect's Vault] -

Quinn stared at the seventh portion of the mechanism, then shifted his eyes to the eighth portion before moving to the last and final ninth portion.

'Bastard!' he cursed, 'how does this even classify as a lock mechanism?!'

In traditional vault locks, one needed to work a dial(or a multiple) as the interface to the entire hidden mechanism. But here in the Architect's Vault, there was no such single interface that Quinn could work off — every portion of the mechanism needed to be worked on from multitudes of angles and every different than the previous one — the complexity rose beyond traditional locks just with that.

'And now, you're asking me to solve three portions at the same time?'

In front of him, he could see three final portions of the mechanism, and the 'catch' was there clear to see. Three portions were connected to each other, and they weren't connected like the previous three (4th, 5th, and 6th.)

'. . . A part of seventh, then shift to the ninth to unlock the part of eight, which then will unlock the next part of the seventh. . . what kind of requirement is that?'

Quinn realized that he would need at least three hours to get past this if he got working the very second, but he didn't have that time. Quinn only had an hour to figure this out and hope that after solving all nine portions, the teal portal back to Hogwarts would reappear so he could make it in time for Umbridge's class.

'Alright, then it's time to bring out the big guns.'

He closed his eyes, and his magic began gently flowing into his brain and mindscape. The efficiency aspect of Occlumency was the part of Quinn's Occlumency that he worked on every day without fail. But there was a catch in the form that he devoted that daily time to increase the immersion on his everyday memories(in the form of memory books) to increase his retention.

The part of the efficiency aspect he needed today was thought acceleration and parallel thought processing. Quinn was good at thought acceleration as he used it passively in addition to some classic techniques to extract knowledge from books. But when it came to parallel thought processing, Quinn didn't train this part as much as he did other things — he could control around control pens in the upper tens and make them write simultaneously, use it in some more complex than normal spell casting, but this was a much more complex task than any of them.

Quinn wasn't sure if this would work.

If he split his mind to think parallelly on multiple parts of the interconnected mechanism, then if one of those thoughts ended up going wrong, every thought process would suffer because of the wrong input.

That problem then would snowball into a big mess in no time as he would have to roll back to the error that he didn't know because, in Quinn's mind, every process was going correctly.

'Then there's the stress this will put on me,' he thought while pursing his lips.

He hadn't used parallel thought processing on a task with this level of complexity. As such, there was going to be a considerable amount of stress on his mind with a clock on how long he could keep it without injuring himself.

"Okay, let's do this and hope the Architects isn't happy in the afterlife,"

and then Quinn got to work.

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Quinn breathed deeply once and settled his back into the backrest of the chair, something he wouldn't be seen doing even if he wasn't dead tired. The last three discs that stopped the pedestal from going inside came out unlocking simultaneously, and the pedestal went entirely into the floor, with the top coming down just to the floor level.

The archway completely sunk deep into the wall, revealing a complete set of stairs with an empty(unguarded) doorway leading to somewhere Quinn didn't bother to check because the second the pedestal went entirely into the ground, the teal portal reappeared, and he rushed out without giving it a single second of thought.

Quinn rose out of his thoughts and looked up when he heard Umbridge speak up his name.

"Mr. West, I heard you've not been feeling today; how're you feeling today?" asked Umbridge sounding extremely pleasant.

Quinn purposely smiled a bit weakly as he responded, "I was feeling a bit faint in the morning, Professor, but I felt well enough, so I came to attend your class — it's one of my favorite classes after all. . ."

Umbridge's smile cramped for a split-second, but she recovered it quick enough before anyone could notice it and smiled widely than before.

"That's good to hear, dear. Health is paramount and should always come first," she said. "If you're not feeling that your NEWT classes are too stressful, how about giving that silly little club of your a rest and focus that time in resting. . ."

Everyone in the classroom ducked their heads a little. If there was one thing clear in everyone's mind about Quinn West, then it was that he would drop classes in his curriculum before he would stop AID. At this

point, AID and Quinn West were synonymous.

"Thank you for your. . . concern. . . Professor, but I think I'll be just fine with what I'm doing now. . . but I do have something in mind," said Quinn, smiling.

"Would you like to share it with the class, Mr. West?" asked Umbridge.

"Of course. If the Ministry doesn't think we would have the need to cast spells because we are perfectly safe without them, then how about we exclude Defense Against The Dark Arts from the Hogwarts curriculum altogether," said Quinn, sending murmurs through the room.

"I know why you're here, Professor," he said.

Umbridge narrowed her eyes, "What do you mean, Mr. West?"

"I mean you're here because Hogwarts couldn't find an adequate teacher for the Defense Against The Dark Arts post, so the Ministry sent you here, said Quinn, "but before coming here, you were the Senior Undersecretary to the Minister—"

"I am still the Senior Undersecretary to the Minister," said Umbridge cutting.

"— as I was saying, your position in the Ministry seems to be very important, so if we do away with the Defense Against The Dark Arts subject, you would be free from Hogwarts and return to your much important position back at Ministry, where I'm sure you're needed more than you're needed here."

There was pin-drop silence in the room as everyone forgot to breathe as they waited for Umbridge's answer.

"Mr. West, Defense Against The Dark Arts has been a part of Hogwarts since its inception by the founders. . ." She saw Quinn raise his hand up,

"Yes, Mr. West?"

"Some old habits will be retained, and rightly so, whereas others,

outmoded and outworn, must be abandoned. Let us move forward, then, into a new era of openness, effectiveness, and accountability, intent on preserving what ought to be preserved, perfecting what needs to be perfected, and pruning wherever we find practices that ought to be prohibited," said Quinn, reciting verbatim from his memory.

"Professor, didn't you say this during your first address to the student body. . . isn't this the perfect example of what must be abandoned and pruned?" he asked.

Umbridge went silent, and her smile too dimmed a level. It was indeed what she had said after the Sorting Ceremony. How was she supposed to reply to Quinn — that she wasn't here to teach but to keep an eye on Dumbledore, and if this position was done away with, she wouldn't have a reason to be here. High Inquisitor would turn into an auditing role, and she would have to return to the Ministry after giving her recommendation.

". . . I will give it a thought, Mr. West," said Umbridge quietly.

"Please do so," said Quinn smiling.

No one in the class raised a peep with regards to the topic because, in their heads, no Defense Against The Dark was much better than having it but with Umbridge. And the majority in the school were just worried about their OWL and NEWT; if you took away a subject from the grading, then there was no reason for them to study as they simply weren't interested.

After that conversation, no one spoke a single word in the class. It was only after the class did people started to chatter.

"What was that all about?" asked Eddie.

Quinn yawned before answered, "She gave me a suggestion about AID; I simply returned the favor by suggesting something about her job." He

stretched his arms up and spoke, "I'm going to visit the Professors to show my face and apologize for missing the classes, then head to the kitchen to grab something to eat. After that, I'm retiring for the day and go to sleep."

"It's only three," said Marcus.

"I don't care; I want to be in bed by five and then sleep at least twelve hours. . . I deserve it."

He had broken through the first room of the Architect's Vault.

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That day after Quinn went to sleep in his bed, away from the worries of the world, Harry Potter bade his friend goodbye and set off for Umbridge's office on the third floor.

When he knocked on the door, she said, "Come in," in a sugary voice.

He entered cautiously, looking around.

He had known this office under three of its previous occupants. In the days when Gilderoy Lockhart had lived here, it had been plastered in beaming portraits of its owner. When Lupin had occupied it, one would likely meet some fascinating Dark creature in a cage or tank if you came to call. In the impostor Moody's days, it had been packed with various instruments and artifacts to detect concealment.

Now, however, it looked totally unrecognizable. The surfaces had all been draped in lacy covers and cloths. There were several vases full of dried flowers, each residing on its own doily, and on one of the walls was a collection of ornamental plates, each decorated with a sizeable Technicolored kitten wearing a different bow around its neck. These were so foul that Harry stared at them, transfixed until Umbridge spoke again.

"Good evening, Mr. Potter."

Harry started and looked around. At first, he had not noticed her because she was wearing a flowered set of robes that blended only too well with the tablecloth on the desk behind her.

"Evening," he said stiffly, keeping down the anger about the Quidditch ban that arose from seeing Umbridge.

"Well, sit down," she said, pointing toward a small table draped in lace beside which she had drawn up a straight-backed chair. A piece of blank parchment lay on the table, apparently waiting for Harry.

"Er," said Harry, without moving. "Professor Umbridge? Er — before we start, I-I wanted to ask you a . . . a favor."

Her bulging eyes narrowed. "Oh yes?"

"Well, I'm. . . I'm on the Gryffindor Quidditch team," Harry had to try once, "I was wondering if you'd lift the ban after my detention is over." He knew long before he reached the end of his sentence that it was no good.

"Oh no," said Umbridge, smiling so widely that she looked as though she had just swallowed a particularly juicy fly. "Oh no, no, no. This is your punishment for spreading evil, nasty, attention-seeking stories, Mr. Potter, and punishments certainly cannot be adjusted to suit the guilty one's convenience. No, you will come here at five o'clock tomorrow, and the next day, and on Friday too, and you will do your detentions as planned. I think it is rather a good thing that you are missing something you really want to do. It ought to reinforce the lesson I am trying to teach you."

Harry felt the blood surge to his head and heard a thumping noise in his ears. So he told evil, nasty, attention-seeking stories, did he? She was watching him with her head slightly to one side, still smiling widely, as though she knew exactly what he was thinking and was waiting to see

whether he would start shouting again. With a massive effort, Harry looked away from her, dropped his schoolbag beside the straight-backed chair, and sat down.

Umbridge watched him with her head slightly to one side, still smiling widely, as though she knew exactly what he was thinking and was waiting to see whether he would start shouting again. She hoped Harry would shout again so she could deal a harsher punishment on him. . . she herself was feeling quite angry today because of a spoiled rich brat and needed to relieve her stress; after all, stress wasn't good for health, and health was paramount.

"There," said Umbridge sweetly, "we're getting better at controlling our temper already, aren't we? Now, you are going to be doing some lines for me, Mr. Potter. No, not with your quill," she added, as Harry bent down to open his bag.

"You're going to be using a rather special one of mine. Here you are." She handed him a long, thin black quill with an unusually sharp point.

"I want you to write, 'I must respect my betters,'" she told him softly.

"How many times?" Harry asked with a creditable imitation of politeness.

"Oh, as long as it takes for the message to sink in," said Umbridge sweetly. "Off you go." She moved over to her desk, sat down, and bent over a stack of parchment that looked like essays for marking. Harry raised the sharp black quill and then realized what was missing.

"You haven't given me any ink," he said.

"Oh, you won't need ink," said Umbridge with the merest suggestion of a laugh in her voice.

Harry placed the point of the quill on the paper and wrote: I must respect my betters. He let out a gasp of pain. The words had appeared on the parchment in what appeared to be shining red ink. At the same time, the

words had appeared on the back of Harry's right hand, cut into his skin as though traced there by a scalpel.

Yet even as he stared at the shining cut, the skin healed over again, leaving the place where it had been slightly redder than before but relatively smooth.

Harry looked around at Umbridge. She was watching him, her wide, toadlike mouth stretched in a smile.

"Yes?"

"Nothing," said Harry quietly.

He looked back at the parchment, placed the quill upon it once more, wrote I must respect my betters, and felt the searing pain on the back of his hand for a second time; once again the words had been cut into his skin, once again they healed over seconds later.

And on it went. Again and again, Harry wrote the words on the parchment in what he soon realized was not ink but his own blood. And again and again, the words were cut into the back of his hand, healed, and then reappeared the next time he set quill to parchment.

Darkness fell outside Umbridge's window. Harry did not ask when he would be allowed to stop. He did not even check his watch. He knew she was watching him for signs of weakness, and he was not going to show any, not even if he had to sit here all night, cutting open his own hand with this quill. . . .

"Come here," said Umbridge, after what seemed hours.

He stood up. His hand was stinging painfully. When he looked down at it, he saw that the cut had healed, and his skin was a rosy red color.

"Hand," asked Umbridge.

Harry extended his hand.

Umbridge took it in her own. Harry repressed a shudder as she touched

him with her thick, stubby fingers on which she wore a number of ugly old rings. She would've made Harry write more and really etch the words on his hand, but this was going to be the limit with his mother here in Hogwarts and James Potter being an Auror and a member of Wizengamot.

"Hmm, this will do. . . please return tomorrow, and we will do something fun again," said Umbridge smiling.

Harry left her office without a word. The school was quite deserted; it was surely past midnight. He walked slowly up the corridor then, when he had turned the corner and was sure that she would not hear him, broke into a run.

His hand wasn't injured, but he could still remember the pain and could even imagine as if his hand was cut right now. He remembered the look of joy she had on her face every time he winced.

He absolutely hated it.

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Quinn West - MC - Status: Sleep mode.

Harry Potter - Boy-Who-Writes - Stubborn.

Dolores Umbridge - Umbitch - Feeling good after stress relief.

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If you have any ideas regarding the magic you want to see in this fiction or want to offer some ideas regarding the progression. Move onto the DISCORD Server and blast those ideas.

The link is in the synopsis!

222. Chapter 222: A Spy In Pink

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After half a day of sleep to recover from the high-stress and high-performance all-nighter, Quinn felt refreshed and free from the nagging irritation that one felt when one wanted to sleep but couldn't.

He sat behind his desk, back straight once again, the patent smile returned to his face, staring at the Boy-Who-Lived who sat in front of him, looking mightily confused.

"Why did you call me here?" he asked.

"I heard you went to Umbridge's detention yesterday," said Quinn and watched as Harry tensed up, "what did she make you do?"

". . . Nothing much, just some lines," said Harry, not revealing how those lines were written.

"Come on, Potter. . . you reek of blood," said Quinn bluntly, causing Harry to sit stiffen up more and showed a look of bewilderment.

"What?" said Harry.

Quinn simply sighed. He couldn't see any scarring on Harry's hands, but that didn't mean he couldn't see the usage of Blood Quill on him. To him, a practitioner of Blood magic, there was a strange linger of blood in the air around Harry.

"She made you do something out-of-ordinary, didn't she?" Quinn couldn't outright tell him he knew about the Blood Quill because without the knowledge he had, nothing pointed out to the usage of one; even he wasn't that good. "Come on, be a lamb and tell me what did she do to you."

Harry remained silent but continued to stare at Quinn, observing him and figuring out what Quinn was after. Quinn didn't say anything for a while, staring back, letting Harry take a good look.

"You don't trust Dumbledore, do you Harry," said Quinn abruptly, startling the Boy-Who-Lived, "and neither do you trust the Professors. Am I right?" There was still no response from Harry, but Quinn could see that his words had hit home.

Even though Harry hadn't gone through as tough of a time as that in the original timeline, he still had to face some harsh times while in Hogwarts. He had suffered through the same whispers and isolation during the Heir of Slytherin debacle. The slander cycle during the Triwizard tournament wasn't as severe as that in the original, but it was still turned Harry into a pariah for a good part of the year. Finally, this year, plenty of students weren't happy with what Dumbledore was doing because of what Harry had said and were swept by the Ministry's smear campaign on both.

But the crux of the matter was that this Harry Potter wasn't as forgiving as the original one. He wasn't brought up in the Dursley household but in one with good parenting. The amount of disrespect Harry had faced in his years at Hogwarts had affected his outlook on various things more than he showed.

"You don't want to go to your mother because you fear that she might lose her job if she goes against Umbridge," said Quinn, "and your father isn't an option because of the stress he might be feeling by working in the heart of Ministry in the Auror's Office with smear campaign going on in full force. . . Am I right?" he asked.

Harry finally relented and nodded in agreement. There was a part of him that was simply being stubborn for the sake of sticking it to Umbridge, but the other part of him felt trapped because he thought that there were no options for him.

"She made me use some sort of quill that drew blood by making cuts on

my hand," said Harry with a sigh and shared his experience of what it felt like write lines with the quill Umbridge provided. He spoke while gently rubbing the phantom cuts on the front of his hand.

"What you used is known as a Blood Quill," Quinn was more than happy to provide the knowledge, "well, at least a form of Blood Quill. . ."

"What do you mean by a form Blood Quill?" asked Harry.

"They're rarely used, so you might not know, but Blood Quills are used to sign documents with the blood of a signee as the binding agent," blood after all was the part of the human body, tied closest to magic, "people are averse in signing magical documents much less magical documents that ask for blood as the binding agents. . . literally, no one wants to sign those — but you see, Blood Quills don't cause wounds like the one you used. They simply feel like a needle drawing blood, even that wound is instantly healed, and standard Blood Quill draws blood only once because not much is needed to sign your name — I'm assuming that was a custom-made torture device. . . and something very dark and very, very illegal."

A Blood Quill wasn't a traditional torture device as it required the target to willingly subject themselves to the pain by continuing to write.

'She must've made it herself,' thought Quinn.

"All of this doesn't matter," said Harry, "I can't go to anyone with this."

"But you can go to literally anyone with this," said Quinn, "sure if you go now, it won't do much; there's no conclusive proof that Umbridge used a modified Blood Quill on you — your hand isn't injured, and I only noticed because of the lingering magic, which is already pretty much faded; even if it was strong, nothing is tying it to Umbridge because first, you wrote the line using the quill on your own accord, and second, it's from a magical item and not from Umbridge's wand."

"In the end, it's useless."

"Or you can lend me some of your time and effort to build a case against Umbridge that would, without doubt, nail her on the head so bad she wouldn't be able to hold her head high in the Ministry much less stay at Hogwarts," said Quinn.

Harry was skeptical at the proposition. He couldn't think of a way in which Umbridge would get punished. Without the presence of any proof, it would be his word against Umbridge's, and currently, the value of his word was at an all-time low. Even if his father and Sirius rallied in the Wizengamot, the strength of the Light faction was flying low because of the defamation that Dumbledore was facing.

". . . What do you have in mind?" Harry asked nevertheless.

Quinn smiled, opened a drawer, and took out a small vial with pale green liquid inside. He placed it on the table right in front of Harry.

"If you take this before you go to detention, you won't feel pain while the Blood Quill cuts into your hand. Day after day of bloodletting is also not good for health, so if you take this, it'll also increase your body's rate of blood replenishment," said Quinn.

"So you want me to keep attending detention? That's your solution," said Harry, not seeing how that would help.

Quinn nodded and reached into the same drawer to pull out a small square box that could fit in the palm of the hand but big enough that one couldn't hide it by closing their fist around it.

"What's that?" asked Harry.

"That's one of my latest inventions. It's the smallest video recorder. . . a spycam to be precise," said Quinn, sounding all hype of a sudden, "it has a shrunken down film roll inside on which we can record a video, and I have made it in such a way that it can record for hours upon hours of

footage, which we then can expand down to full size and play on any projector."

The truth was that Quinn had already found a way to record videos on things other than film rolls which was the only way to record video which wasn't electronic. But he had to create a recorder that used photograph film rolls because if he introduced something new, there was a possibility that it would be kicked out as evidence.

"All I need you to do is to sneakily drop this in her room, and I'll take care of it after it. This will record her office when she's in her office, whenever you're in there for your detention, and whenever anyone is there for their detentions. . . inside the walls of her office, where she feels safe and thinks no one is watching — we will be watching. Her every misdeed will be for us to see. . . So, are you willing to do this?" Quinn added at the end.

"Will this work?" asked Harry.

"Absolutely. . . if we can provide the Auror's Office with proof against Umbridge, they would literally put it as the top priority and direct all their available resources to her case.

"A court is a place of law, sure it's full of deception and manipulation, but in the end, if there's one thing that can ensure justice is proof and evidence. If one can provide enough proof, and present it decently, then the guilty party will get what's coming for them. . . Umbridge, with Fudge's support, will be a tough cookie to crack, but if we present overwhelming proof and put Amelia Bones as the prosecutor, then she will be deep trouble."

"Alright, let's do it then," said Harry, "I'll give you footage of two weeks of writing lines."

"Perfect," said Quinn smiling, "let's catch a toad."

The two shook hands, and the deal was set.

After Harry left, Quinn looked at the table, which was missing both the tiny video recorder and the potion vial; Harry had taken both of them.

There was no need to include Harry in the plan. Quinn could've installed the camera by himself, and even now, he would be breaking into Umbridge's office with Recon to change the film reels. But he wanted Harry's detention to go well in Umbridge's eyes. She would definitely whip out the Blood Quill on everyone if she thought she could get away with torturing the Boy-Who-Lived. And that's what he wanted, for Umbridge to become relaxed and use the Blood Quill on every student she gave detention to; this way, he would have the overwhelming evidence he was looking for.

'Dolores Umbridge. . . I would take her out of the Ministry all together. It's time for her to retire,' he thought with a smile.

"But to think he didn't think of collecting himself," Quinn said, wondering about Harry's lack of action, "but maybe that makes sense; his father is an Auror after all,"

Aurors were essentially a mix of police detectives and armed forces of a magical community. They faced deaths, murders, homicides of magical and non-magical people caused by magical means regularly, and it wasn't strange that many Aurors chose not to share their work with their family members, especially not with children.

And with the way the British schooling system was set up, the children from the tender age of eleven only got to stay at home for at most three months spread throughout the year because of the boarding school policy at Hogwarts. Any sensible parent who worked as an Auror or Hit Wizard wouldn't share some hard facts with their children when they were younger than eleven because, after that, they were barely home long

enough except during the summer break.

So it wasn't strange that James Potter didn't get enough time with his children to get past spending quality time with his children during their summer breaks and teach him some tips and tricks.

"Let's get to work," Quinn got up and headed into his workshop; there were many preparations to be made for this thing to go smoothly.

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At five o'clock that evening, Harry knocked on Umbridge's office door for what he sincerely hoped would be the final time, was told to enter, and did so. The blank parchment lay ready for him on the lace-covered table, the pointed black quill beside it.

"You know what to do, Mr. Potter," said Umbridge, smiling sweetly over at him.

Harry picked up the quill and glanced around the office; it was as repulsive as yesterday. He couldn't wrap his head around how someone could like a decor like this. If he just shifted his chair an inch or so to the right . . . On the pretext of shifting himself closer to the table, he managed it. Now his left hand was just at the edge of the table, and if he let it dangle, it would be as far as Umbridge he could possibly be in his current seating position.

I must respect my betters, Harry wrote. The cut in the back of his right hand opened and began to bleed afresh.

I must respect my betters. The cut dug deeper, but unlike yesterday it didn't hurt at all.

I must respect my betters. Blood trickled down his wrist.

He chanced another glance at Umbridge. Harry looked up whenever he

thought he could risk it when he could hear the scratching of Umbridge's quill or the opening of a desk drawer.

I must respect my betters.

I must respect my betters.

The parchment was now shining with drops of blood from the back of his hand, which seemed to be the right time to plant the bug, as Quinn had put it. He pretended to pull out a handkerchief to wipe some of the stray blood, and in doing, so pulled the spycam out of his pocket and let it fall onto the ground.

As the cube fell to the ground, it sprouted eight spider-leg-like protrusions, which it landed on. Harry watched with wide eyes as the cube spycam's lens suddenly turned towards Harry before redirecting its lens all around the room.

Harry suddenly heard Umbridge's voice and hurriedly turned his gaze towards the parchment.

"Mr. Potter, is there a reason why you stopped?" she asked.

"No, Professor," he said and started to write again: I must respect my betters. He did give one quick glance towards the floor, but spycam had disappeared to be seen nowhere.

Inside the AID office, Quinn's sighed deeply as he sat beside his desk, looking into a rectangle screen set up in landscape mode sitting on the desk.

"What the hell is that idiot doing," said Quinn, "he almost ended the sting operation before it started."

The cubical body of the spycam held things other than the film recorder.

The lens of the spycam doubled as a transmitter that would send live footage to the screen sitting on Quinn's desk — it was based on the two-way mirror that Sirius Black and James Potter used to communicate with

each other when they were in Hogwarts so they could talk each other while serving different detentions. The lens could send videos(not recordable) so that Quinn could control the spycam through the spider-legs.

Then there was an audio transmitter based on Quinn's own magical wireless eavesdropping earbuds. The difference was that Quinn was better at runes than last year and the space inside the spycam was a bit bigger than the transmitter he used in the original, so the transmission range was much wider than before.

"Now, let's plant it into a non-descriptive corner."

Back in Umbridge's office, the spycam got to the edge of the floor, and the lens pointed upwards towards the target. It stared at the pink wall for a second before a change appeared on the spycam, and the black cube turned invisible and began its climb up the wall towards an edge of the wall before planting right on the said edge.

Quinn from the AID office turned the lens towards Umbridge's desk with Harry and Umbridge in the frame. The next second, the small film roll inside the spycam started to turn as the lens let the light in, which then got concentrated into the tiny space, landing on the individual reels of the film as it spun on the two rollers recording the video at a low twenty-four frames per second for an extended recording length.

"Alright, that's done," smiled Quinn. "Now, High Inquisitor Umbridge, I wonder what sort of things would you show me. I'm truly looking forward to the dirt I'm going to detect," he chuckled, "I wonder if this is how Rita Skeeter feels when she's going her work. So exciting!"

The bug had been planted.

Quinn West - MC - My name starts with 'Q', so I'm perfect as the

Quartermaster.

Harry Potter - Boy-Who-Bugs - Acting to feel pain is more challenging than he thought.

Dolores Umbridge - Umbitch - The amount of sugar she likes in her tea is being recorded.

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If you have any ideas regarding the magic you want to see in this fiction or want to offer some ideas regarding the progression. Move onto the DISCORD Server and blast those ideas.

The link is in the Bio!

223. Chapter 223: DA

Files:Family' BlackSheep

If you want to read ahead of the posting schedule then head over to my Patreón.

All the chapters would still be posted here, but you can support me with a donation and get chapters earlier than usual as a bonus.

Link in the Summary

December arrived, bringing with it more snow and a positive avalanche of homework for the students of Hogwarts. The new normal for the Room of Requirements was the DA members practicing their spells in the DA meetings, with Quinn in the lead as he wandered around the summoned room, taking note of the progress while providing guidance to anyone who seemed to be having a tough time and to those who were just a tweak or two away from pushing their casting to the next level.

"Listen well, people. Today's going to be the last session before Christmas, so please ask about any problems or doubts you have regarding any spells we have covered in our meets — it can be the Disarming spell we learned at the very beginning or the Severing charm we learned today. I will

front any doubt right now, so you don't go home feeling unsure about what we have learned."

It was already nearing Christmas, and Hogwarts would enter a winter break of roughly a week while DA would be suspended to rest for two weeks. The progress had been coming along pretty well, and the ones who weren't proficient in a given spell were improving, while those who were good at them were moving onto spell variations to solidify their repertoire.

A hand was raised from the crowd.

"I've been meaning to ask, but why's he a part of DA?" said the person pointing to another person from the group.

The hand was pointing to Theodore Nott, fifth-year Slytherin. Theodore Nott was a dirty blonde with amber eyes with classic pureblood aristocratic features. From Quinn's interactions with Theodore Nott as an AID client and Legilimency screenings, he had observed him be a taciturn guy who was keenly observant of his surroundings. Of course, not many got past the obvious to know the guy.

"His father is a Death Eater; shouldn't he be the last person to be here?" said the person who had raised his hand. "We never know if he's working with Umbridge. I suggest that we get rid of him before he betrays us to Umbridge." There was a scathing cut in his voice as if he was talking about the worst scum of the earth.

Quinn pursed his lips as if holding himself from screaming. "You know, I was asking more of a magic question, but alright, let's take care of this," he looked at the rest of the listening group, "who else has this same problem?"

No one raised their hands, but Quinn noticed a few shifts in eyes and shuffle of feet. He didn't call out any of those people.

"Alright then, Harry Potter and Theodore Nott come forward," he said, "Ivy, you approached the Slytherin students and invited them, so you take this up and tell them why Nott is here."

The three fifth-years old stepped out from the group to the front as Quinn stepped back to the side with his arms crossed.

Ivy took a look at both her brother and Nott before turning to the group.

"Like every Slytherin student here, Theodore Nott was invited based on Quinn's recommendation. We ourselves did some checking on him, and he, for the most part, came out clean," no one was perfect, "when we ensured that Nott would keep the secret, we approached him to see if he was interested and the answer as you can see it is obvious."

She turned to Harry and asked, "Do you have any problems with Nott being part of DA?"

"Not really," said Harry, "we never had any bad blood between us, so I had nothing against him joining DA. . . and well, I did ask him the question straight up."

Ivy, once again, turned to Nott, "What was the question, and what did you answer?"

"What do I think about You-Know-Who?" said Nott, "My answer. . . I am not my father."

It had surprised him when Harry Potter had suddenly, out of nowhere, for the first time since both had come to Hogwarts had spoken to him, but the question, on the other hand, didn't surprise him.

"Taking that answer with Quinn's recommendation, we thought that was enough to induct him into DA. . . What do you think about Umbitch?" Ivy added the question to not at the end.

"She is annoying. . . to say the least," said Nott shortly to the point.

"Well, there you go, he and I are of the same mind," said Harry, "if I don't

have a problem with him, then I don't think anyone should."

Ivy turned to the person who had initially raised the question, "If you're still unsatisfied with our selection criteria, then we're sorry because we don't have anything better than this, and Nott hasn't done anything for us to dismiss him out from the group.

"Also, I don't want to see house discrimination in here. The sole reason for the creation of this group is to learn magic with no other agenda. There's no Gryffindor, Slytherin, Ravenclaw, Hufflepuff, only Hogwarts when you come into his room. So if I hear any reports of daft petty arguments based on house differences, there'll be recuperations, and I will give out punishments."

As this was going on, Quinn silently stepped beside Marcus and whispered, "Why did he suddenly call Nott out after so many classes?"

"Apparently, Nott and that guy were pitched against each other quite a few numbers of times during mock-duels and paired as practice partners.

. . . And well, it's, to say the least, but that guys and Nott aren't on the same level," said Marcus, whispering back.

"Ah, so this was out of frustration, huh," said Quinn, "hmm, alright, I'll put in more effort for the pairings, hmm, that'll take some thinking to do — well, I'll put Eddie against Harry; that'll be really fun."

"They will try to tear each other apart," said Marcus.

"Hmm, that's a genuine possibility," but then Quinn waving it off, "Nah, it'll be fine, they'll be fine. . . what's the worst they could do, a couple of broken bones — I can fix that in a jiffy."

"There's going to be a lot of blood," said Marcus sighing.

"Oh, absolutely. That's without a doubt," said Quinn smiling.

After the DA meeting ended and everyone was leaving for their common room, Quinn was stopped by Theodore Nott.

"Quinn, can we talk?" he said.

"Sure, what do you want to talk about?" said Quinn, and both the boys stayed in the Room of Requirements after everyone left.

"Thank you for standing up for me," said Nott.

"Uhm, I don't know if you were paying attention or not, but I stood by the side and let the three of you do the talking."

"Yes, I know that. I'm talking about your recommendation that allowed me to be a part of DA," said Nott, "when I was invited, I was visited by both the Potter twins, and I don't think they liked me for DA, and neither did they try to hide the fact they didn't like me. If it wasn't for your recommendation, I wouldn't have been considered for being a part of DA."

"Well, you're welcome," said Quinn, and usually the talk would end here, but Quinn noticed the tension on Nott's face. He sighed silently, and two chairs manifested in the room.

"Sit down," he said when Nott looked at him in confusion, "Now the niceties are out of the way — you thanked me, and I accepted, let's come to the point. Tell me what do you actually want to talk about?"

Nott followed Quinn's instruction and sat down on the comfy chair but didn't start speaking immediately. Quinn watched as Nott seemed to struggle and looked he was building up the courage to speak up.

"The Dark Lord is back," said Nott after the silence.

"Yes, I realize that," said Quinn, "his return, if it's true or a hoax, is all people can talk about these days."

"No, I'm telling you that he's back. My father. . . he told me that the Dark Lord is alive. . . and in the summer he went out to gatherings in his Death Eaters, he even talked about the Dark Lord to some guests. . . who were all Death Eaters."

Quinn observed Nott, and the guy had his hands clutched with; there was a bead of sweat dripping from his forehead.

"You seem to be stressed," said Quinn, "do you fear that your father will induct you into Death Eaters when the time comes?"

"I don't fear it. I know it will happen!" said Nott raising his voice, "he'll present me to the Dark Lord even if it means to cast Imperious on his own son! That man hadn't talked about You-Know-Who at home before last year, but now he can't stop talking about him. . . I — I. . ." by the end, he was all but wheezing.

"You wish to escape the fate of being forcibly drafted as a Junior Death Eater," said Quinn.

Theodore Nott nodded deeply.

"Can you help me?" asked Nott, "I'll do anything if you help me, please. . ."

Quinn stayed silent for a moment before speaking up.

"I can't make your father disappear," well he could, but that wasn't the point, "neither can I change him from a devout flavor of the Dark Lord to a saint with the Father of the Year award. . . but I can provide you with freedom, to be specific financial freedom."

"What do you mean?"

"You're a fifth-year, and I'm pretty sure your father won't have you marked at least before you're of age, which will be before your seventh year. Hell, I bet, if things go well, you'll not get marked until you have graduated from Hogwarts because your father won't want the risk of his son marked and then sending him to study under Dumbledore."

That made sense to Theodore Nott, and he had never thought he would be marked with the Dark Mark before he graduated.

"So, you're probably safe till you exit Hogwarts," said Quinn. "Your grades

here at Hogwarts are decent, and you look fairly competent with magic. .

. so what I can offer you is a job."

"A job?" asked Nott confused.

"Yes, a simple, honest-to-magic job," said Quinn, "a job that'll earn you money and allow you to start a life of your own. I can even reallocate you far away from here so that your father can't just whisk you away back to continue the family legacy.

"The choice here is yours. If you're willing to leave the life of comfort you have been living till now, change your lifestyle, which will probably degrade a lot because you won't have your father paying for everything, and you'll need to pay for yourself. Hell, you've two years, if you work hard, you can improve your skills, both hard and soft, and that will get you a better starting job which in turn will pay you more."

This wasn't even Quinn doing him a favor. His father had set up the recruitment drives every year at Beauxbatons, and that cooperation between his family business and the school continued to this day. Even if Lia never went to Beauxbatons, the West family still would've picked up students from the school. Quinn could do the same and set up something similar in Hogwarts — picking up talent when they were young and nurturing them to be a part of the company community was good for any business.

He didn't even need to immediately set up something concrete. If Quinn simply offered the jobs to people like he did to Nott, he could probably pick up a good majority of the best people from Hogwarts, except those who had something particular in mind like Weasley twins who wanted to open shop or those who had the dream to get a job in the Ministry or those who wanted to be Aurors or a particular niche.

"Are you sure you can do that?" asked Nott.

"Providing you with an opportunity is simple enough," said Quinn shrugging, "if you're able to convert it into something good is all up to you."

"So, I just need to work hard?" asked Nott.

"Yeah, find out what you're passionate about; see if there's a demand for it; if it's something you can make money doing; how to get good at it.

Then come to me to tell me, and I will set you up with a job. If it's something you can't do without further training, then we can sign a contract where we can provide you with training in exchange for you working a number of yours for us. . . education or, more specifically, gaining useful skills can open many doors for you, Nott. You just need to look for them."

Then Quinn got up, prompting Nott to do the same.

"Feel free to come to me if you've anything you want to talk about, and I will sort you out. You don't have to worry, Nott. Your future isn't set in stone; your future still remains firm in your grasp for you to shape it in any way you like."

"Y-Yes," said Nott, his voice cracking with emotion. It felt a rock had been lifted off his chest. "I'll work hard."

Quinn nodded with a smile and then saw Nott off. He watched in thought as the Slytherin walked away.

'The child of an inner circle Death Eater,' thought Quinn, 'an important asset if used correctly.'

Quinn was willing to provide Theodore Nott with an escape. But there was rarely free lunch in the world — the thing was to see if the future would allow Theodore to gain a free lunch, or he would have to pay something in return after all.

'Only time will tell,' thought Quinn, 'I wish the fates are on your side,

Nott.'

Quinn looked out of the corridor towards the pale half-moon shining in the night sky and wondered what was the key player responsible for Theodore's worries was doing right now.

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In a room lit with burning candles and the blazing fireplace, the Dark Lord, the one with multiple lives, the one who sought immortality, the one who had instilled so much terror in the minds of people in this country that people didn't dare utter his name and addressed him as You-Know-Who or He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named behind his back. Those loyal to him bowed their heads and kissed the edge of robes to show the subservience. The resurrected Dark Lord Voldemort sat in a chair, staring at the fire in the fireplace.

His thoughts were interrupted when there was a knock on the room's door.

"Enter," he said.

The door creaked open, and Lucius Malfoy entered the room, his head bowed.

"My Master," said Malfoy Sr.

"I hope you bring good news, Lucius," said Voldemort, not removing his eyes from the fire.

". . . I apologize, Master, but the news is not good," said Lucius Malfoy.

"What went wrong?"

"Broderick Bode successfully entered the Prophecy hall without any problem, but when he picked it up. . . the defensive around it was triggered, and he suffered from mental damage. . . he seems to think that

he's a teapot."

"So, even an Unspeakable can't touch the prophecy," said Voldemort in a low pondering voice.

Broderick Bode was an Unspeakable working in the British Ministry of Magic's Department of Mysteries. Lucius Malfoy, Voldemort's spies at the Ministry, placed Bode under the Imperius curse to force him to attempt the same theft.

"He seemed to be strangely resistant to the Imperius curse," said Lucius pointing his observations, "I suppose it could have been because Bode, being an Unspeakable, knew what would happen if he tried to remove one of the Prophecies and tried to resist."

"How's the news of his condition being taken at the Ministry?"

"They believe that Bode had simply been injured in a workplace accident, he was taken to St Mungo's for treatment, but it seems his injuries seem to irreparable, and as such, he was moved to the Spell Damage ward.

From what I have heard, he's comatose most of the time, and those times he was awake, he was mumbling and staring at the ceiling."

"Hmm. . . leave him there, but keep an eye on him to see if he gets better," said Voldemort, "he resisted the Imperius curse, there might be a chance that he might have identified you. . . if he gets his mental facilities back, it might turn problematic for you, Lucius. . . the word of an Unspeakables hold a weight that even you can't shrug off."

"Your concerns are wasted on me, Master," said Lucius, bowing, "I'll put some people to keep an eye on Bode."

"Hmm. . ." was all Voldemort said in reply, and because he hadn't dismissed Lucius, Malfoy Sr. could only stand in his spot waiting for the next order.

Voldemort hadn't removed his eyes from the fireplace once, and he

continued to observe the flames as they licked the wood for food.

Voldemort knew that only those related to the Prophecy could retrieve it, but he had hoped that an Unspeakable would be able to get it for him, but that plan had failed.

The next option was Harry Potter, the Brat-Who-Got-Lucky, but Potter's Occlumency shields were good enough that Voldemort couldn't send him anything through their mysterious connections.

'If only I could get my hand on Potter, I would rip his shields apart one shred at a time.' It displeased Voldemort that he wasn't able to get into Harry's mind.

The next person was Dumbledore, but that wasn't an option. The old man avoided the Prophecy like the plague. So, the only remaining person was himself, but he had been avoiding that, but now with no choices, things had to change.

"Lucius."

"Yes, Master."

"Get things ready; it's time to get our old friends back."

Lucius knew what Voldemort was talking about, and he wasn't really thrilled about it. "Master. . . would that be wise?" he said carefully.

"You should be happy about it, Lucius," said Voldemort with a rare chuckle in his voice, "your wife would be happy to have her sister back."

Lucius could only stiffly nod his agreement even though it was the last thing he wanted.

"I will make preparations," he said.

"Good."

It was time to bring home his most loyal followers, those who wouldn't hesitate a bit to give their lives for him.

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Quinn West - MC - Slowly collecting assets.

Theodore Nott - Slytherin - Now looking towards a new hope.

Voldemort - Dark Lord - Time to bring his favorites back.

Lucius Malfoy - Death Eater - Needs to prepare for a jailbreak.

Broderick Bode - Unspeakable - I'm a teapot; would you like some tea?

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If you have any ideas regarding the magic you want to see in this fiction or want to offer some ideas regarding the progression. Move onto the DISCORD Server and blast those ideas.

The link is in the synopsis!

224. Chapter 224: Second Room,

Winter Break

If you want to read ahead of the posting schedule then head over to my Patreón.

All the chapters would still be posted here, but you can support me with a donation and get chapters earlier than usual as a bonus.

Link in the Bio/Profile

The day before the Christmas break, close to eleven in the cover of night,

Quinn stepped into the Architect's vault and into the first room of the vault. It was as he had seen it for the first time he had entered the vault.

"Solving this every time I come in here is annoying," Quinn voiced to himself as he descended the few steps to the pedestal in the middle of the room.

Quinn had found out that every time he stepped out of the vault, the pedestal would rise up again and lock the archway staircase back into the wall.

He stood by the pedestal as he flooded everything stone in the vault with his magic, and soon after, the entire room began shaking as Quinn began solving the mechanism inside the walls. The nine portions that made up the mechanism could be divided into three parts — [1,2,3], [4,5,6], [7,8,9].

The first three were individual locks with no dependence on other portions from their group. The second three were connected in successions where every solved portion was added to the next portion. The last three were interconnected and were mutually exclusive to each other and needed to be solved simultaneously.

And as Quinn stood by the pedestal, he solved all three sets simultaneously to be quicker, and now that he knew the correct combinations, he was able to use parallel thought processing at a manageable level without a migraine in his future. The pedestal started to fall one by one in quick successions, and as he walked towards the revealing archway, the last three portions clicked together, the pedestal went into the ground.

He stared down the dark staircase with the end nowhere in sight. Two orbs of light manifested around him as he stepped down the first step, and they flew steps ahead of him and stopped to hover at the sides of the staircase. Another two orbs of light shimmered into existence and flew farther than the previous two orbs and placed them beside the walls. Just like that, two new orbs of light would appear, fly deeper into the staircase, and line the walls to light up the entire staircase.

Soon he arrived at the end of the staircase and stepped out of the tunnel into an expansive room. Quinn stared around the strange room as he stepped forward deeper into the room; it was an empty chamber; just like the first room with the pedestal, this room didn't have any decoration

and seemed purely functional in nature.

He stopped one-fifth of the way into the room and stopped just at the edge of where the floor ended and stared down the deep and dark chasm right in the middle of the room. The first time he had entered the room, the chasm had reminded Quinn of an abyss. He looked up from the ravine and stared at the other side to see the continuation of the floor and the opposite of the room. Three-fifths of the room was the chasm, with one-fifth of the floor of the room's length on each side.

Quinn's initial thought had been that the Architect wanted him to cross over the chasm and get to the other side, which he easily did with a broom, but the result was disappointing — there was nothing there — the room only had the one door. . . but that was just code for the existence of a hidden exit.

"Where's it hidden this time," said Quinn, once again looking for clues, which he had already done the last time he was here.

The room was definitely created by the Architect. There was no surface in the room that wasn't smooth and straight — the ravine in the middle of the room was perfectly rectangular with no irregularities. The walls, the floors, the ceiling were marked with gridlines.

There was only one place remaining in the room that he hadn't looked in. He once again looked down into the dark ravine, and dozens upon dozens of orbs of light appeared above the ravine before dropping down into the chasm, lighting it up in the bright white light.

"Let's go," said Quinn and stepped forward and down into the chasm. His robes fluttered up as he fell down around thirty feet and landed with a smooth, bright blue Arresto Momentum.

He landed on a flat surface and looked around the lit-up bottom of the chasm with observing eyes, and just like above, the surfaces were

covered in grids, but there was one thing that seemed out-of-place — a large white cube laid in the middle of the floor. It stood out from its grey surroundings.

Quinn approached the cube cautiously and walked around it a couple rounds to observe it thoroughly. From just taking a look, there wasn't anything of exception other than that the cube was sitting perfectly on a square in the grid on the floor.

"Alright, let's see what's the deal with this," he said and stepped near the cube, but when the tips of his fingers touched the cube, it suddenly trembled.

"Whoa," Quinn immediately stepped back from the cube, "I just touched it."

The tremble lasted only for a few seconds before the cube stilled. It was only after that the changes started to appear.

First, a line appeared that separated the cube into two halves — upper and lower.

Then another line further divided the upper-half into two other halves — left and right.

Next, two large circles appeared on both the right and left halves, and then two perfect cylinders with smaller radiuses rose from the circles; they rose for a foot before stopping.

The second the cylinders settled at their peak height, another circle appeared in the middle of the upper half of the cube such that the line which divided the cube into left and right passed right through the center of the circle.

The portion of the line inside the circle disappeared, and another cylinder rose; this time, the entire circle rose instead of a smaller part. Quinn watched as the cylinder rose for half a foot before he saw the end of the

cylinder as it rose up into the air and then flew to the straight right above one of the raised cylinder platforms.

The floating cylinder stilled for a moment before it started to vibrate and wiggle — the cylinder turned into a pile of grainy dust before reforming into a perfect solid cube, which then gently set down on the cylinder platform.

'That's. . .' thought Quinn, but before he could even finish it, a sound broke his line of thought.

Quinn looked to his side to see a cube in the wall grid slide out with the sound of stone grinding against stone and suddenly changing to white from its original grey.

"That's transmutation," said Quinn looking back and forth between the wall cube and the apparatus that rose from the center cube.

"So. . . what do I need to do here?" Quinn said to himself. There were generally no written instructions for him, and he needed to figure out the next from the circumstantial clues present in front of him.

He touched the small cube on the cylinder and flooded it with his magic; it was made from a dense stone with an incredibly smooth surface. Then he moved to the bigger wall cube and did the same things; this one was made from the same material.

"Okay, let's try this," said Quinn with a scrunched-up expression on his face. Quinn pushed out more magic into the stone, and this time, instead of scanning, he used transmutation and pulled his hand back for a block of white stone to come out detached from the bigger block.

Quinn heavily sighed in relief, "Oh, thank magic, this wasn't covered with defensive spells." He had tried transmutations in the first room, and it was safe to say that Quinn wasn't a fan of explosions going off in front of his face.

"Hmm, same material. . . transmutation from the vault's side. . . my own transmutation also worked perfectly," Quinn contemplated for a good few minutes before he went back to apparatus-cube.

He put down the block he had taken out from the wall cube aside and focused his attention on the cube sitting on the cylinder platform. He reached into his pockets, took out a tape measure, and began measuring the sides of the cube, and after a couple of measurements, he picked up the block from the wall cube and cast transmutation on it.

The block vibrated and turned into an unstable state before solidifying into a cube shape. As the block was heavier than the cube on the platform, the resulting cube was larger than it. So, Quinn began shaving it down with transmutation until he had a replica of the platform cube in his hand.

"Now, let's see if my guess is correct."

Quinn gently placed the replica on the second cylindrical platform, and it was instant that the apparatus cube began vibrating. The vibrations persisted for a couple of seconds before the replica cube rose and along with it the material that Quinn had shaved off. Everything went back into the wall cube and transmuted back to its initial stage.

The wall cube then slid back into the wall, and when it was again part of the grid, it turned back from white to grey. But it wasn't over yet because the cube next to it in the grid slid out and turned white.

Quinn looked back at the apparatus cube and saw that the cube on the platform had also changed into a cuboid.

"Ah, so that's how it's going to be, huh," said Quinn.

He understood what he needed to do. Every time a cube came out of the wall, he needed to take some out of it and use transmutation to make a replica of the object on the first cylinder platform and place said replica

on the second cylinder platform — if it matched the material he took out would go back in, and the next wall cube would come out, the shape to replicate would change, and the process would repeat.

"Well, that's good and all. . . but," Quinn looked around the chasm and then at the roof above, he imagined the entire room, "isn't this too much?"

Of a rough calculation off his head, there were at least around a couple hundred cubes in the grids around the room.

"This is going to be another freaking long thing. . ." said Quinn, his voice showing his displeasure — he didn't like grunt work at all.

He didn't know that the Architect had something else in his mind when he created this room.

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"I'm home!" said Quinn up as he entered the West manor through the front gate after apparating from the King's Crossing.

It was the third week of December, and Hogwarts students were allowed to go back for a ten-day Winter/Christmas/New-Years break, and as he did every year, Quinn always went home to spend time with his family during the holiday season. Quinn had never gone home during the two-week Easter/Fall break in April because that was usually the time he was fully locked in with the vault progressions, but he never missed Winter break.

He walked the familiar halls with a smile on his face and arrived at the lounge, but there was no one there. Today he had come home alone because he had asked his family not to come to pick him up at King's Crossing.

"Polly!" he called loudly, and in the time he set down on his briefcase down, the West family house-elf popped in the room.

"Little Master is home," said Polly clapping as she jumped excitedly as soon as she arrived.

"I'm home, Polly," said Quinn smiling back, very happy to see Polly even though she was the one family member who he could see with a single call.

"Where's everyone?" he asked.

"Big Master and Mister Elli are away. Little Mistress is to arrive in the evening. Missy Rosey is in the back gardens," said Polly.

"How long have they been gone," asked Quinn as George and Elliot could be out in the day and back by evening, or they could be away for a couple days for a business trip.

"Big Master and Mister Ellie went away two days ago," said Polly as she summoned some refreshments, "they be returning on Boxing Day."

"So, it will only be me, Lia, and Ms. Rosey this Christmas, huh," said Quinn, "maybe I'll invite Luna home if she's free. . ."

After Polly and Quinn caught up, Quinn went to the back gardens to meet Ms. Rosey and tell her that he had returned (he had stopped Polly from doing so.)

When Quinn found her, Ms. Rosey looked as she always did — dressed in prim properly in one of the classic Victorian-era-styled robes that she liked so much with her hair tied into a bun covered in a black net. She wore reds and browns — all her clothes were of the warm color palette. He just stared at her for a couple of moments as she took care of her own personal section of the garden.

"Ms. Rosey, I'm home," he finally called out.

She turned around at once and stared at Quinn for a moment before

speaking. "You stopped Polly from telling me."

"That I did," he said, smiling as he hopped his way to her.

Ms. Rosey looked Quinn over for a while before she nodded with satisfaction. He looked alright.

"Welcome back home," she said, "how was your first term?"

"It was horrible," said Quinn pulling a pitiful face, "Dolores Umbridge is a horrible woman sucking all the fun out of Hogwarts. She tried to shutdown AID, but I showed who's the bigger bully in Hogwarts."

"Bigger bully. . . why would you use that term to describe yourself?" said Ms. Rosey sighing.

"Bad guys, when done right, are way cooler than the good guy."

Ms. Rosey shook her head; sometimes, she couldn't understand Quinn.

Maybe it was because of the generation gap, she thought to herself.

"What else did you do?" she asked, wondering if Quinn took on something new for this year like he did last year.

"Hmm. . . I've been tutoring some people."

"Your friends? What were their names again?" Ms. Rosey asked and then answered on her own, "Luna Lovegood, Eddie Carmichael, Marcus Beibly."

"Yeah, them," said Quinn, "and a couple more people." Around forty more.

"You should bring them home," said Ms. Rosey, "I would like to meet them, and I'm sure so would your grandfather — If I'm right, only Lia has met them."

"How about I invite them over for Christmas? Nothing big, just a small party. How about that?"

"Not for Christmas," Ms. Rosey refused outright, "Your grandfather and Elliot won't be home, I'm not even sure if Lia will be home for Christmas. . . and you have work to do on Christmas."

"What do you mean?"

"You will be attending the Ministry Yuletide Ball in your grandfather's place."

Quinn's reaction was immediate.

"Can I not do that?" he said, pleading, "make Lia do it, please. You know I don't like attending those events. They're bothersome, annoying, and boring."

"As I said, Lia might be busy, and your grandfather asked this because you have been skipping events like these for a couple of years. It is essential to show your face in public once in a while to build some connections."

"But I've connections," said Quinn in rebuttal, "I've more than enough — no, I have an absurd number of connections in Hogwarts and all in the right places. There's no need for me to go to the Ball to make more."

"Be that as it may, you will go to the Ball. You will be going as your grandfather's representative. Your sister has done it plenty of times; it's time you do your share."

"But—"

"Not liking it is not an excuse I will be accepting. End of discussion," said Ms. Rosey, "now what would you like to eat. I will have Polly prepare for you. . . I can ask her to make sausage rolls if you would like; I know they are your favorites."

"That change of subject isn't fair," said Quinn, all but pouting, "but yes, I'd like some sausage rolls, please, and I would like a Shirley Ginger to go with it. Furthermore, I demand steak for dinner with four scoops of ice creams in the dessert."

"We can do that," said Ms. Rosey, "but you'll only get three scoops, and that's only for today."

"This is oppression."

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Quinn West - MC - I don't like this. I demand more!

Ms. Rosey - Caretaker - No.

FictionOnlyReader - Author - I haven't eaten ice cream in such a long time. . .

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If you have any ideas regarding the magic you want to see in this fiction or want to offer some ideas regarding the progression. Move onto the DISCORD Server and blast those ideas.

The link is in the synopsis!

225. Chapter 225: Christmas Ball

Once Again

If you want to read ahead of the posting schedule then head over to my Patreón.

All the chapters would still be posted here, but you can support me with a donation and get chapters earlier than usual as a bonus.

Link in the Bio/Profile

Lia West sat on a sofa in West manor's lounge, legs crossed, with a smile on her face. She stared ahead with amusement evident on her face.

"Why do you dislike functions and balls so much?" she asked, chuckling.

In front of her sat her baby brother, all dressed up in a suit, ready to go to the ball, but his mood wasn't what one would expect from a person ready to a party. Crossed arms, grumpy face, and an overall displeased body language weren't the telltale signs of looking forward to an evening enjoyment.

"Why would I enjoy working on Christmas?" said Quinn huffing, "and it's not even the work that I enjoy — a ball with me trying to avoid those

bootlicking people trying to get handsy like we are close, isn't how I ever imagine how my Christmas would go."

"It's not that bad, you know?" said Lia smiling.

"Weren't you the one who complained about getting hit on by old fatties?"

"That I did, and that's exactly why you should go. Why should I have all the fun."

"Again, this isn't my definition of fun," said Quinn, "ugh, it's too late to pick up Eddie; he has a very good 'don't-you-dare-come-near-me' face. . . I would just stand beside him, and he will do the scarecrow work for me."

"I'll just spread a spray of a mild Confudus around myself, confuse people into leaving me alone," said Quinn, "hmm. . . that actually isn't that bad of an idea, maybe I'll just do that."

"Don't do that," said Lia, sighing, "properly show you face to the people that matter, and if you want to leave after that, you're free to do so, but no magic shenanigans at the ball."

"Alright, I'll try. . . but no guarantees," said Quinn, "if anyone gets extra annoying, I'm coming home; I might even go for a movie."

"In a suit?" asked Lia.

"A little illusion magic won't hurt anyone. You know what, I'll go see a movie like this, fully decked out in this classy thread."

"Don't talk like you're definitely going to see a movie today," said Lia.

The clock struck six and thirty, and Quinn got up to leave. He and Lia walked to the floo-fireplace room.

"I could apparate there," said Quinn, "I know a place three minutes away from there. I could walk the rest way."

"How would you deal when someone tries to escort you after the party, and you don't have anything prepared for you. It would be better if you

take the floo, or you could've listened to Ms. Rosey when she tried to book you a carriage," said Lia.

Quinn sighed. He hadn't been the most cooperative when it came to the Christmas Ball. He wanted to keep things as simple as possible without fanfare, which meant no winged-horse pulled carriages.

"It's Windford Hall," said Lia.

"Yes," said Quinn, "alright, I'll see you around ten."

"Have fun," said Lia in a sing-a-song voice.

"Yeah, yeah," said Quinn casting a spell on himself to keep the floo-dust off him. "Windford Hall," Quinn threw the floo-powder in and disappeared in the gulf of green.

Lia waited for the fire to disappear before turning back. It was time to get drunk with Ms. Rosey and Polly — a girl's night was the theme of Christmas.

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Quinn came out of the green fire onto a polished marble floor on which he could see his reflections between the patterns. He looked around and saw that the wall behind him had five fireplaces, all burning in weak green fires only to flare up when someone traveled out from the floo-network.

Quinn looked to the right side of the hall; he spotted the entrance to the building and could see carriages pulling outside with guests. On the left of the hall, he could see a smaller entry, and based on the people coming in and out, Quinn assumed it was a hallway that probably led to the restroom area.

To his front of him was the grand entrance to the shiny, all sparkly

ballroom, the place he needed to spend around four hours mingling with people.

'People can sometimes be dull,' he thought.

A wave of magic swept over him, and his clothes and appearance were fixed to look the best. He proceeded inside and saw a small line starting from the top of a staircase that led down to the main hall area.

"Mister and Missus Ogden of Ogden's Old Firewhisky!"

Quinn realized what was happening. The man in front of the line was the Master of Ceremonies, and he was announcing the arrival to the ball.

To Quinn, this was an open invitation for people to come and talk to him, so he reached into his coat (his extended pockets) and took out a big handful of galleons, and conjured a royal-velvet pouch/purse around them, and tied the top with a similarly conjured string.

When he reached the front of the line, the Master of Ceremonies extended his hands and asked, "The Invitation, please."

Quinn placed the invitation letter in the hand of the man who opened it to check the authenticity. He nodded as it was the genuine article and was about to announce the name — Quinn's name as it was written on the invite — but Quinn cleared his throat to catch the Master of Ceremonies' attention.

"Yes?" asked the announcer.

Quinn placed the pouch/purse in the hands of the man and smiled, "An appreciative gesture for your hard work and something for your silence."

The Master of Ceremonies felt the weight of the pouch in his palm and saw the glint of gold peaking from inside. He bowed his head with a small smile.

"I wish you'd have a Merry Yuletide, Master West," said the man in a low voice as he gestured for Quinn to proceed down the stairs.

"And you as well," said Quinn before he stepped down with a smile on his face. At least one thing well, and he felt it was a good start to the evening.

At the end of the stairs, Quinn picked up a goblet with a random drink from the waiter's tray and gently started to sway as he looked around the ballroom to take in the vibe — luxurious, grandiose, extravagant.

Quinn headed straight to a corner of the room and looked down into his glass. The red liquid under Quinn's sway and a bit of magic had turned into a tornado inside the goblet.

"I picked wine, huh," said Quinn in a mutter, "they should be careful what they serve to who. . . well, whatever."

He snapped his fingers, and the red wine vanished into a fizzle of bubbles, leaving behind a wine-free goblet in his hands. He reached into his pockets with his hand and took out a silver hip flask with a grin on his face.

He had been to plenty of these parties, and while there was always a great selection of alcoholic drinks, they only served butterbeer in the name of non-alcoholic beverages, which Quinn didn't like to drink (too sweet), so this time around, he had brought from home.

"Alright, let's get the good stuff out," he opened the flask and started to pour into the goblet.

"What're you doing?"

Quinn immediately turned the flask and goblet still in hand to see Daphne Greengrass standing behind him dressed in a stunning red dress that did delay his words a bit as his eyes roamed a bit.

"You look stunning," said Quinn bluntly.

"Thank you," said Daphne in reply, "you look good in that."

Quinn looked at his midnight blue checkered suit and nodded. "Suits suit

me, it seems," he said.

"I didn't hear your name called out," she said, "or your surname, in fact."

"Oh, I came alone today; rest our bloody busy on Christmas; no work-life balance if you ask me," said Quinn getting a look from Daphne, which he ignored, "as for the absence of announcement, the Master of Ceremonies didn't seem to like me very much, so he refused to announce my name."

Daphne refused to believe that even for a second. The Master of Ceremonies didn't make announcements on the basis of his likes or dislikes. Her best guess was that Quinn asked his name not to be announced.

"You didn't ask my question," she said and looked at his hands, "what're you doing?"

"Ah, this huh," said Quinn smiling and extended the goblet to Daphne, "would you like some Pineapple Cobbler? It's fresh and cold. . . which means it's very, very good."

Quinn thought she would refuse, but Daphne took the goblet for him, leaving him surprised and out of a glass.

"Thank you," she said.

"You're welcome," said Quinn, shrugging as he conjured a cup for himself and poured himself a drink, "ah, that hits the spot," he said after taking a sip.

"Where's Astoria? Did she come?" asked Quinn.

"No, she went to another party at her friend's house," said Daphne.

"Lucky duck," said Quinn, "I should've thrown a party myself. That would've been a pretty good excuse."

"You really don't like parties," said Daphne.

"Nope," he said after taking a sip, "but now that you're here, I can enjoy this travesty," he looked around the ballroom, "why do they have to make

things so tacky. . . whoever organized and did the interior design has some strange taste."

"I thought you would like this," said Daphne, "given how flashy you become when you organize big events. Especially after last year. . . you really did go all out from the moment Durmstrang and Beauxbatons stepped into Hogwarts."

The FOUR(houses, founders, mascots) demonstration; the seven rings in the first task; and the magical projection in the second and third round; the scale of the Quidditch Tournament. Everything that Quinn had organized last year were the biggest event in Hogwarts' recent history.

"My dear Daphne, there's a difference between tacky and what I did. I might be a fan of the flair, but I do things with a certain class. My events don't go overboard with all the glitter and gaudiness — everything in moderation is the key."

It was then that Quinn noticed someone behind Daphne and raised his hand.

"Zabini!" he called.

Blaise Zabini, who was walking by, turned at the sound of his name being called out and saw Quinn West and Daphne Greengrass standing by a corner with Quinn motioning him to come to them.

"Ah, another one to keep me company," said Quinn smiling, "I was dreading this for no reason; I should've known that you guys were coming."

"Hello," said Blaise.

"Good evening," replied Daphne.

"Ah, look at me forgetting something so important," said Quinn, "Merry Christmas, and I hope you're having a great Yuletide, both of you," he was feeling chipper now.

The trio wished each other Christmas and Yuletide greetings.

"Zabini, you want something to drink?" asked Quinn. "I have Pineapple Cobbler, Citrus Fuzz, Shirley Ginger, Lavender Lemonade, Rose Fizz, Lemongrass Jasmine Iced Tea, Virgin Paloma," he said, taking out a handful of shrunken down hip flasks, "damn, I brought too many. . . all of them hold more volume than the regular flask. . .so, you guys would have to help me finish these."

". . . I guess I'll have the Citrus Fizz," said Blaise, and before he knew it, there he had a goblet full of fizzy golden in his hand.

"Hey, West, I was wondering if I could ask you something?" asked Blaise.

"Sure, what do you want to know?"

"Listen, I heard that thing you talked about with Theo. . . Theodore Nott. I was wondering it was open to others."

"Ah, so he told you about that, huh. Well, I suppose it's natural. . . you both are friends," said Quinn, and he didn't mind.

Daphne looked at both boys in confusion. She didn't understand the topic of the talk.

"What are you talking about?" she asked.

"I offered Theodore Nott a job opportunity after Hogwarts. The job he gets depends on his interests, how well he does in Hogwarts, and the skill he builds in the next two years," said Quinn before turning back to Blaise.

"Sure, it's open to you as well. You get the same deal as I gave to Nott; do well in the next two years, and you'll have a better starting point. Want to learn more? We can provide you with further training — it's all up to you want to do; of course, there will be some caveats, but they will come with rewards as well."

In the amount of time Quinn had spent with George, Elliot, and Lia, he had learned a few things about company culture — if an organization

could provide the best job environment, the people working in that environment would like to stick because it was good for them and then that would benefit the organization. And Quinn was all for getting the cream of the crop from Hogwarts and making them part of the West business.

It could be said that Hogwarts was in possession of a golden goose in the form of Quinn West. Every student that had some connection to Quinn could get a golden opportunity from just asking, and if they did well, their immediate future would be secure with further possibilities in the later future.

"Really, you're not joking, are you?" asked Blaise.

"I have no reason to joke, Zabini. If you do good, it would be better for me," said Quinn, "but I do have a question that I'd like to ask."

"Sure, whatever you would like to ask."

"Is the reason you're asking me about this because of your mother?"

Irene Zabini was a witch and the mother of Blaise Zabini. She was famously beautiful and married seven wizards who each died in mysterious circumstances, leaving her with a large amount of gold from each. It was unknown if she was the reason behind her deaths or if they truly were a string of unfortunate deaths, but it was a mystery talked much in many circles.

To some level, even Quinn was curious if the woman was a killer or just really unfortunate, and he was also curious if Blaise was her son or stepson and who was the father. He, of course, couldn't ask either the mother or son about the birth status of Blaise. Quinn was even skeptical that if Blaise himself knew of his origins.

"Yes. . . I would like to get some distance between mother and me till I can figure things out," said Blaise.

If others were curious about the seven deaths, then there was none who wanted to know more about the truth than Blaise. He was at an age that he had got curious about the question, and currently, Blaise's mind was in turmoil about if the answer he would get be the one he was fearing.

Moreover, Blaise never knew when his mother would get herself a brand new husband. He wanted to get out his mother's roof as soon as possible, and getting a well-paying job that could support his independence was essential to him.

"I see. . . I can't say I know to be in your position; I can only imagine," said Quinn, "well, you can come to me when you're ready, and you know where to find me if you have any other problems."

"Thank you, that means a lot, West," said Blaise sighing in relief. Even though he still had more than two years before he could actually take the next step, this promise was represented a great deal to Blaise.

"Work hard, Blaise. Only you can direct how your life goes," said Quinn, raising his goblet, which Blaise followed.

"Uhm, you two should change the topic immediately," said Daphne suddenly, "Blaise, your mother is walking towards us."

Blaise straightened up and immediately looked back to see that his mother was indeed walking towards them with a glass of champagne in her hand.

"Oh my, well, I can definitely see why she's so popular," said Quinn.

Blaise turned to give a Quinn incredulous look.

"Sorry, really," said Quinn, zipping his lips.

Irene Zabini was a blonde bombshell, a seductress-type beauty that gathered a lot of eyes around her. Even now, as she was walking here in her black velvet floor-length gown, many men were enamored by her, following her with their eyes.

"Blaise. . . so this is there you were dear. I have been looking for you everywhere," said Irene Zabini

'Oh my god, even her voice is. . .' thought Quinn. It was so smooth, velvety. . . sexy was the word that popped into the mind when hearing Irene Zabini's voice.

"Yes, mum," said Blaise.

"Why don't you introduce your friends to me."

"Ah," Blaise turned and did the introductions, "this is Daphne Greengrass and Quinn West. . . and this my mother," he added at the end.

"Greengrass. . . so, you're Sophie and Jacob's daughter," said Irene looking at Daphne before turning to Quinn, her every move as erotically charged. "Quinn West, you say. . . aren't a handsome one. . ."

". . . Thank you, ma'am. You too are gorgeous," said Quinn.

He was feeling conflicted about whether he should use Occlumency or not. It was very confusing.

"Oh please, dear; don't call me ma'am. It makes it sound like I'm old. . . you can call me Irene~."

'Oh my god!' Quinn screamed in his head as he nodded with a smile on the outside.

"Good, did your grandfather come today?" asked Irene, brushing a hand through her hair, "I should go say hello. . ."

". . . Unfortunately, my grandfather was busy today, so I came alone," said Quinn with a polite smile, but he was screaming inside.

"What a pity. . . I would have loved to talk to him."

Daphne looked between Quinn and Irene, and she didn't like what was happening, so she did what seemed logical. She grabbed Quinn's arms pulled him.

"Quinn, let's go dance. I like this song very much," she said.

"Eh, huh, sure," said Quinn letting him get pulled along.

Irene watched as the pair walked away, and a smile appeared on her face.

"Oh my, so innocent~, " she said with her hand on her cheek.

She then turned to Blaise and asked, "Would you also like to dance, Blaise. You can always dance with me."

"Thank you, mother, but I would like to pass," said Blaise.

"Are you embarrassed?" said Irene looping her arms around Blaise, "My son grew up before I knew it."

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Quinn West - MC - Oh my god!

Daphne Greengrass - Feeling threatened - I want to dance.

Blaise Zabini - Another promised one - Mother. . . please everyone's looking.

Irene Zabini - Married seven times - Don't care about them, come one, let's dance.

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If you have any ideas regarding the magic you want to see in this fiction or want to offer some ideas regarding the progression. Move onto the DISCORD Server and blast those ideas.

The link is in the bio!

226. Chapter 226: Christmas Ball:

Part-Duo

If you want to read ahead of the posting schedule then head over to my Patreón.

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Link in the Bio/Profile

Daphne led Quinn to the dance floor as he finished the contents of his goblet and sneakily dropped it down behind him for the conjured goblet to vanish before it hit the ground. As they reached a good starting point, Daphne relinquished the lead back to Quinn for the actual dance.

"Well, doesn't this bring back memories," said Quinn as he held her hand with one and placed the other on her back, "this is just like that Ministry Ball all those years ago — it was also during Christmas."

Daphne nodded as she got into position. "You wanted to dance because it was a waste to learn dancing and not dance."

"I said that, didn't I?" said Quinn smiling widely. "Come to think of it, you're always there when I get to dance in public. . . that Ministry Ball, the Yule Ball last year, and now. . . I always end up dancing up with you. Hmm, I wonder I should dance more — three times in the last few years seems low."

As Quinn spoke, Daphne stared at Quinn. How could he say things like that without understanding what they did to her? How was she supposed to respond to hearing that she was there every time he danced?

"Ah, I have been meaning to ask, how's your progress with healing going on? Taking up healing requires a ton of work, so I wonder if you're set for your OWLs — I know a paper doesn't decide your future, but if you want to get into a good healing program and learn from a good master, you'd need good grades on both your OWLs and NEWTs."

Quinn wasn't looking at Daphne as they danced and was keeping an eye around to make sure they didn't bump into someone, but when he didn't get a response, he looked down at Daphne and saw her crystal blues staring up at him.

"Daphne?"

The girl seemed to snap out of a trance and almost seemed flustered in

Quinn's arms as she realized what she had been doing.

"Sorry, what did you say? I missed it," Daphne said a bit too quickly and then reprimanded herself internally for losing composure.

Quinn tilted his head in confusion but repeated himself again.

"They have been going well," she said as she got her rhythm back, "I've been reading the basic concepts of healing magic on my own time. It's not as complicated as I thought it would be. True, there are multitudes of things to cover, so many different types to master, but no matter what I come across, there seems to be a reason for them to be the way they are, and I only need to understand for them to make sense to me."

Daphne wanted to become a healer so that she could heal Astoria of her blood curse one day, and no doubt that was her primary motivation, but as she actually picked up the basics of healing, the subject and magic seemed to suit her — everything she tried to learn seemed to make sense to her, and things clicked her mind — it felt different from the understanding that she gained for the Hogwarts curriculum — healing magic seemed to call out to her. She didn't know if it was because she wanted it so much or just had a sense of healing magic, but everything healing seemed to interest her so much.

"Sounds like you're having fun," said Quinn; the way her shined right now said it all.

"Do you also feel like that?" asked Daphne.

Quinn's reply didn't come for a couple of seconds. "It's the time for me," he said.

"Time? What do you mean?"

"Somewhere along the line, I don't know when. . . I don't think it was a singular point. . . but somewhere, some time, I began losing time. . . or to be more exact, the time seemed to pass quickly when I studied magic. . . I

don't know if I'm explaining it correctly, but I get lost when I'm with magic. . . it's like I just got started a minute ago, but then suddenly, it had been an hour or two. . . . That's what it feels like for me.

"It doesn't come every day, but it does come every so often, and I only realize that it came after the fact, but when it comes, I feel good, terrific," said Quinn.

People concentrated when they were doing a task; they would focus on what they wanted to do. But for Quinn and magic, he didn't need to concentrate — magical learning would pull out the concentration for him, and it was damn beautiful to Quinn.

"Ah, I'm sorry if I trailed a bit too much," said Quinn, matching eyes with Daphne.

"No, that was fascinating. I would like to hear more," said Daphne. I would like to know more about you, she thought.

. . .

Outside the dance floor, Jacob Greengrass and Sophie Greengrass watched their daughter slow dance with a boy as they seemed to talk and laugh while holding with each other.

"Look at those two," said Sophie smiling with her eyes, "I feel like it was just yesterday when we first saw them dance together. . . they were but children then, look at them both now, all grown up."

Jacob Greengrass stared at her daughter. "Hmm. . ."

"Don't they look good with each other? Astoria also seems to think that; I remember hearing her teasing Daphne about Quinn."

In the arms of a boy. "Hmm. . ."

"I think Daphne likes Quinn," said Sophie, her eyes sparkling.

They weren't children anymore. "Hmm. . ."

"I think they suit each other. I wonder if I should talk to Daphne to see if

she does like Quinn."

Wasn't this around the same age he had started dating Sophie? "Hmm. . ."

"She might need her mother's help." Thoughts began building in Sophie's head.

His dear eldest daughter falling into the clutches of a boy. "Hmm. . ."

"A boy like Quinn must have a lot of girls who like him," Sophie thought about when she was young and the time before she and Jacob had started dating. Her husband was very popular among the girls; she had to be assertive to show her interest.

'Boys,' thought Jacob, were filthy runts with their top floors filled with dirty thoughts. "Hmm. . ."

"That girl is shy when it comes to things like these. She needs to be more outgoing if she wants to get what she wants."

His daughter 'going out' with those filthy creatures. . . "Hmm. . ."

"We would have to support Daphne, don't we, dear?"

Yes, we would need to support. . . "Wait, what have you been saying. . ."

Daphne is too young to be things like that; it's time for her to focus on her future," said Jacob, his mind catching up with his wife's words,

"now's not the time to support but to help Daphne understand that she has her entire life in front for things like silly crushes — right now, it's time for personal development. . . yes, that's it," Jacob finished feeling satisfied with his line of thought.

"Oh dear, you're being silly," said Sophie, looping her arm around Jacob's,

"she has her entire life to worry about studies and stuff. . . but this time won't come back," she leaned near her husband, "it's time for her to experience this time and leave those worries for a later date."

Jacob grumbled. He wanted to argue, but there was no use doing it. He could oppose this, but Sophie would support it, and he wasn't a fool; he

could see his daughter held some interest in Quinn West, and in this situation, Daphne would follow after Sophie's advice, sidelining him.

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"That was fun," said Quinn handing Daphne another goblet after the dance.

"It indeed was," said Daphne, a small smile gracing her lips.

"Zabini, did you enjoy your dance with your mother," said Quinn with a teasing smile.

Blaise sighed. His mother had dragged him to dance despite his opposition and resistance.

"Blaise."

The Slytherin turned to see his best friend Theodore Nott walking towards them.

"Theo," said Blaise in greeting, "you're late."

"My father is always late to these," said Theodore pointing around the ballroom. He then turned to Quinn and Daphne, "Daphne, West, good to see you both here as well."

Quinn raised his goblet while Daphne nodded.

"Zabini here just asked me the same deal I offered you," said Quinn.

Theodore turned to Blaise, who nodded.

"He accepted," said Blaise.

"I did, but don't go spouting out this to everyone," said Quinn, "if you think someone will definitely need what I offered you, then come to me first, and I'll decide if I want to bring them into the loop. I don't want to be swarmed by requests like today from Zabini."

"We'll keep that in mind," said Theodore. This was too important for him to mess it up.

"Good, now chill. It's Christmas, have some fun," said Quinn before

looking around the ballroom with a sigh, "now, if you three Slytherin will excuse me," he sighed more, "I'll have to show my face to some people and engage in small talk. . . I swear I'll have to do something that'll give me a lifetime pass from this."

When Quinn left, Theodore turned to Daphne and Blaise and asked.

"What did he mean by that?"

"He doesn't like parties," said Daphne.

"And, he came alone, so I guess he needs to chat with some people,"

Blaise guessed.

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Cornelius Fudge walked around the ballroom, smiling and nodding to people as he passed them by. He was looking around to see who was talking to who, trying to get the lay of the land and if some new connections were forming that he needed to know about.

'Hmm, everything's looking good,' thought Fudge.

But then he saw a group of people gathered around in a group with great chatter happening in there. It made him curious, what was happening and what were they talking about. Fudge walked towards the group and heard someone speaking to the group.

"It's all about adding value to your business. . . matching what your competitor is doing isn't good enough — giving the public what they have seen before isn't good enough, it's redundant to show them the same thing they can get another place. . . you have to give them something extra, something that would catch their eye enough to sway them away from your competitor."

Fudge moved closer towards the group, and because he was the Minister,

he didn't need to muscle his way to the front of the crowd as people gave him the way.

"So, to attract customers to your business, you need something new. . . but that doesn't mean you need to release new products every season to generate that new wave of revenue. Let me tell you something: only around five to ten percent of products every year are truly original; the rest of the new things you might see in the market are little improvements to existing products. . ."

Fudge finally made his way to the front to see the backside of a person dressed in a blue checkered suit talking to the entire group, who all were looking immersed and were hanging to his every word.

"So, remember to be greedy. . . not about money. That's actually secondary. You need to be greedy about progress and not stop in a spot and think that you can relax now that you're ahead of the pack. If it takes effort to get ahead, then it'll take more effort to stay ahead. You all need to add value to your products, to your process, to your employees, anything you do better will help you better your business, and if you're better, your customers will line your coffers with their pockets very much happily."

Fudge watched as the person turned toward his direction and saw a familiar face.

It was Quinn West.

'West's are at the Ball?!' thought Fudge surprised and taken aback. It was a critical time for him — he needed all the time he could get — and here he was standing, staring Quinn West in the face having no prior information about his presence.

He looked around to find George West, but there was no sign of the man with the most gravity of anyone invited.

"Ah, Minister didn't see you there," said Quinn, "I wish you a Merry Christmas and hope you're having an auspicious Yuletide."

"Thank you, Quinn," said Fudge, "I wish the same to you and hope your good health."

"That's kind of you, Minister," said Quinn smiling.

Seeing that the Minister had occupied Quinn, the crowd dispersed with only a few hanging around, but at a distance.

"What were you doing there, Quinn?" asked Fudge.

"So you heard that," Quinn sounded shy, "that was just the little ol' me trying to see if I could share something that I learned from hanging around family shops. . . though I don't think I have something of use to offer in this regard."

Fudge recalled how everyone was listening to Quinn's words and shook his head.

"It looked like everyone was deeply interested," said Fudge.

Quinn simply smiled.

"Quinn, I didn't know you were here. I must've missed the announcements," said Fudge, and even if he did, some of his people should've informed him — someone was getting fired today, "I would like to greet your grandfather, if you'd guide me towards him."

"My grandfather isn't here today, Minister," said Quinn happily, "he got occupied with something and has been busy for a few days, so he couldn't attend today, and I came in his place because I was free."

"Ah, is that so," Fudge tried his best not to sound disappointed.

"Yes, but if you'd like me to pass along a message, I'd be happy to do so," said Quinn courteously; of course, if it was some bullcrap, his grandfather wouldn't hear a word of it.

"No, it's fine. I'll talk to him myself."

"Alright."

"How's Hogwarts going? I'm hearing good thing now that Dolores is at the castle."

"Madam Umbridge?" said Quinn and then just smiled, refusing to comment.

Fudge looking for all things positivity from his initiatives, took that as a glowing recommendation.

"Minister, if you see Madam Umbridge, tell her that I wish her a Merry Christmas and that the remaining of her Yuletide goes well," said Quinn before taking his leave.

After a while, Umbridge, who was also present at the Ball, came strutting towards Fudge.

"Cornelius, so this is where you were. Lucius Malfoy wants to talk to you," she said.

"Oh, Dolores, I'll be there in a minute," said Fudge, "also, I just met Quinn West."

". . . What?"

"Yes, he said to wish you a Merry Christmas. What a sweet and intelligent boy he is. Please make sure that you take care of him at Hogwarts. I'm sure Quinn personally will do great things in the future; you should've listened to his words; they were insightful," Fudge then went onto pile praises for Quinn onto Umbridge as she stood there turning to stone with every word that came out of Fudge.

After Fudge left to talk to Lucius Malfoy, Umbridge remained rooted in her spot. She wasn't expecting to hear praises of Quinn from Fudge's mouth. She wasn't expecting to hear anything about Quinn — the winter break was supposed to be the time free from the mention of the boy's name.

But now this happened. Umbridge could read between the lines. Fudge wanted to maintain a positive relationship with Quinn. But that was the last thing she wanted.

'I must reveal his true face to Cornelius,' she thought.

Umbridge felt someone looking at her and turned to look up towards the second floor to see a figure leaning towards the railings.

It was Quinn West.

When their eyes met, Quinn raised the goblet in his hand towards her with a smile on her face before pushing himself away from the railings and walking away while still looking at Umbridge, to whom that smile looked one of mocking.

Her breathing heaved as anger started to build inside her. Her eyes remained affixed at the place where Quinn stood as her eyes turned red with fury.

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Quinn West - MC - Creating jobs, Dancing, Dishing advice, Raising glasses — overall mad lad.

Daphne Greengrass - Daughter - Is now gathering courage.

Sophie Greengrass - Mother - Guiding her daughter is her duty and pleasure.

Jacob Greengrass - Father - "Hmm. . . what?!"

Dolores Umbridge - Furious - Oh so, furious.

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If you have any ideas regarding the magic you want to see in this fiction or want to offer some ideas regarding the progression. Move onto the DISCORD Server and blast those ideas.

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227. Chapter 227: Decree Wave,

## Spinning Web

If you want to read ahead of the posting schedule then head over to my Patreón.

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"What the fuck is this?!"

In the grand Entrance Hall of Hogwarts, an enormous crowd of students gathered around the bulletin board. There was turmoil bubbling in the crowd — spreading, clawing, restricting them, making them feel bound and controlled(not in control).

The board was filled with a myriad of new notices that everyone noticed first thing in the morning of the day after the students returned to Hogwarts after the Winter/Christmas/New-Year break. Every single of the new notices followed the same template, and it was damn clear who was behind them.

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EDUCATIONAL DECREE - NO. TWENTY-SIX

EDUCATIONAL DECREE - NO. TWENTY-NINE

EDUCATIONAL DECREE - NO. THIRTY

EDUCATIONAL DECREE - NO. THIRTY-SEVEN

EDUCATIONAL DECREE - NO. FORTY

EDUCATIONAL DECREE - NO. FORTY-SIX

EDUCATIONAL DECREE - NO. FORTY-SEVEN

EDUCATIONAL DECREE - NO. FORTY-EIGHT

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"What in Merlin's hairy balls was that woman on when doing. . . this!"

Eddie threw up his hands towards the bulletin board, not able to

comprehend the sight in front of him.

"Forbade boys and girls from being within six inches of each other — that's I guess for Diggory and Cho because Diggory hasn't been cooperating," said Marcus, reading the new Educational Decrees, ". . . prohibited joke products made by Fred and George Weasley — for their candy that makes it look you're sick. . . . banned items that were not of educational value — I'm guessing she's trying to ban Quinn's AID card because she's not able to shut it down. . . . boys to keep their hands outside their cloaks — that's just stupid. . . . proper dress and decorum — was there a real need to turn proper dressing into Decree? She had the power to enforce this even without turning it into a Decree."

"The proper dress and decorum decree makes sure that we don't try to alter our uniforms to get around the hands out of the cloaks decree. . . she's trying to be smart," said Quinn.

'Hmm, that thing at the party really irked her, huh,' thought Quinn, and he wasn't feeling happy about it — the AID cards from the very first generation were built with a feature that showed if the office was open or not because Quinn's timings for consultation were never consistent and because Luna popped in and out whenever she felt like, there was not a single definite schedule where you could come to AID to get help — one needed to look at a card to see if the office was open for a consult.

'I would need to send out a school-wide warning to hide the cards in circulation to protect them from being prohibited.' Quinn sighed because he didn't know how many cards would survive this ban before he did something about it.

Quinn also realized that now with this, he would either need to start sitting in his office for definite hours every day or start an appointment system to predetermine who will get to see him.

'She finally did something to annoy me,' thought Quinn, his lips pursed, 'I guess I'll have to do something to make her life more difficult. It's only fair.'

Quinn felt a hand on his shoulder and turned his head to see Cedric Diggory standing behind him.

"What're we going to do with this?" asked Cedric, "this is already going way overboard." Cedric wasn't as stressed about the NEWTs as his other seventh-year peers and had a solid handle on things to perform well.

What he truly wanted from this year was to enjoy Hogwarts before graduating, and this was dumping a bucket of ice-cold water on it.

"I won't say not to worry about this, lover boy. This is an apparent attack on student freedom in Hogwarts, and I would definitely need to think somethings to get a workaround for her rising dictatorship, but I'm sure we can overcome this. . . spread the word in your trusted Prefects, we'll need the help from the Prefect network."

Dolores Umbridge had power inside Hogwarts that was unquestionable, and that wasn't a point of debate, but that power wasn't absolute — she could be challenged; it was just the question of how to challenge that authority.

"Well, we'd need to get creative."

Creative until the time came where the bug had spun enough web to trap a toad in its trap.

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There was a time in the history of Hogwarts when the school required multiple Professors for the same subject because of the number of students attending. The times when the young population was too high

for a single teacher to handle and effectively teach, and every subject used to be headed by a Head of Department who would take on apprentices doing their apprenticeships under the Head of Department who were Masters.

The apprentices would teach the younger kids in the lower grades, while the Masters would teach the higher grades consisting of older kids. But that practice had left Hogwarts with the rise of other magical schools around the world (Hogwarts being one of the oldest schools of magic), and the parents not needing to send their children to foreign to learn magic.

When that practice died, the apprenticeship in Hogwarts also closed down because now a single Professor needed to teach all seven grades on their own and couldn't take responsibility for guiding an apprentice.

In recent history, during the Second Wizarding War of Britain and in extension the continent of Europe, the birth rate of the magical population of the British Isles and Ireland slowed down in the wartime, and as such, for around ten to twelve years, the number of children born in the magical households dipped to a low in a very long time. It was interesting to note that the first-generation magicals (muggleborns) population didn't change and the ratio of first-generation magical children to those born in magical households was at an all-time high.

The effect of that dipped birth rate was showing now as for the last decade, the number of children Hogwarts was at a lower end of the scale, with the castle operating at its lowest capacity ever since the First Wizarding War.

Though that trend was now becoming a blip as for the last couple of years, the number of Hogwarts inductees was again at a rise to a healthy amount as it was before the war.

"I haven't done this before, and I'd have to say, it seems like a much bigger responsibility than I thought it'd be when you told me about it before," said Quinn looking up from a stack of parchment.

Filius Flitwick smiled in his high chair that he used to keep himself at the table level and stopped grading the assignments given to the students for the Winter break to look up at Quinn, who was helping him grade assignments.

They say in Flitwick's personal office. Hogwarts had a dedicated staffroom where most of the Professors could be found in the school hours mingling together during their off periods, but after evening, they would retreat into the personal offices to do duties like grading assignments and papers in peace and quiet.

"Grading assignments is a consummate part of a Ravenclaw Prefect's duties even since I took over the position of Head of House," Flitwick said with his toothy smile. "It starts right from fifth-year; I make them grade a portion of first and second-year students' assignments while the sixth-year Prefects such as yourself grade a part of third and fourth-year assignments. The seventh-year Prefects don't have grading as a primary duty because they're busy with their NEWT preparations, but they do take over the fifth-year Prefects from time to time because of the OWL year.

"You didn't get to do this last year because you were too busy with the Quidditch Tournament, so I never assigned you this task."

Quinn read the essay assignment on the Banishing charm from a fourth-year Hufflepuff, and after thinking a lot and going back and forth, he gave up and asked.

"This is tough. . . I don't know if I should grade these based on how they did relative to each other or if I should grade them absolutely on the

amount of understanding on the topic," said Quinn because relative grading and absolute grading had their merits and demerits and choosing one could change the way grades came out at the end.

"Don't apply relative grading," said Flitwick, not raising his eyes from the papers as his quill wrote remarks, "rate them on their understanding they have on the topic and remember — they're fourth years and not sixth-years like you, they'll naturally know less than your grade. . . it might not be the correct analogy, but go easier on them."

Quinn nodded and looked down at the parchment. Judging from the structure, how penmanship transformed from the start to the end, and the overall content, it was definitely the last day of the vacation effort. So after thinking it through, giving it much thought, and going back and forth, he wrote A for Acceptable on the top of the parchment and on a grading table for Flitwick's reference and records.

"How was your break?" asked Flitwick.

"It was uneventful," said Quinn, "I didn't do much other than roaming outside for half a day and hang out around the house for the rest of the day. . . nothing special, I suppose."

Ever since Quinn had come to Hogwarts, every time he went back home, be it in the winter or in the summer, he would spend a lot of time outside the house, roaming around the country, which was made easier with floo-travel and later apparition. Being "stuck" at Hogwarts for the most part of the year really tingled Quinn's exploratory tick, so he would just go around looking for anything new he could find.

"And how about your return? What do you think?"

"Uhm, eh, they're a bit annoying, but we will see how it turns out," said Quinn, then looked up, "how about you? I heard that she ended her inspections before the break. . . how do you think you're going to fare

when the results are out?"

"That. . . I wouldn't know, and I try not to think about it," said the half-goblin, "I did my job to my best, and my work speaks for itself. There's nothing for me to worry about," Flitwick looked up with an almost bored expression, "I've held this position for decades. There have been many attempts from parents who don't like the idea of a half-breed goblin teaching their children; this isn't the first I have had the threat of getting fired from Hogwarts, and I'm sure it won't be the last time either, but just like every other time, this will pass like a silly little breeze," said Flitwick with utter confidence.

Quinn nodded in admiration.

And Flitwick didn't need to be worried about his job.

The Progress Report of Magical Didactics was a document used to evaluate Hogwarts teachers. It was passed by the Department of Magical Education. Some basic biographical and magical information that the document required included name, age, star sign, address, magic rune, expiration number, agility, magical technique, accuracy, wand control, among others. Based on answering some questions (like Do you consider yourself a risk-taker? Give an example), the teacher would be graded Appalling, Bad, Fair, Good or Excellent.

But the truth was Umbridge used it ostensibly as a means of evaluating Hogwarts teachers. In actuality, however, Umbridge targeted any teacher close to Albus Dumbledore that she felt she had a reasonable chance of dismissing without raising suspicions.

There was a great chance that Umbridge might target Flitwick because of her blatant hate for half-breeds, but the thing was that Flitwick had exceptional credentials — Master of Charms, A long time Champion in various Duelling Circuits, and an excellent, memorable Professor who

provided outstanding guidance to essentially everyone who had graduated out of Hogwarts in the last few decades.

If Umbridge touched Flitwick, she'd be attracting eyes from all over. The same thing went for McGonagall and Sprout, and well, Snape, who was like a guardian angel to all who strutted under the banner of Slytherin. To be direct, there was no way to kick out the Head of Houses without the four making grievous errors, which they hadn't, especially after Umbridge was on everyone's tail.

"Well, if she annoys you, tell me," said Quinn, "I'll add it to the list of things that need to be retaliated upon. Maybe, it'll turn into a great spectacle."

"I will keep that in my mind," said Flitwick before sighing, "I just hope that everyone will come out this safe and sound."

But both knew that the chances of that happening were meagre.

Umbridge was on the warpath from the moment she stepped into Hogwarts. She was going to get someone, and there were a few good candidates for her to whack; the question was how many of them would go.

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Eldon Pembroke, fourth-year Hufflepuff, dawdled his way, feeling the lowest of low — this afternoon, he was given detention in the Defense Against The Dark Arts because he got frustrated and raised a question and maybe got into a "heated" debate with Umbridge, which landed him into the mess.

"Ugh, what I'm going to do?" he groaned. How was he going to spend hours on end alone with Umbridge for an entire week continuously.

He arrived at the Hufflepuff common room entrance and sighed for the umpteenth time today. He couldn't even open his mouth to utter the password and enter the common room.

"Hey, Pembroke."

Eldon turned left where the voice came from and saw Quinn West standing at the end of the hallway, which surprised him because he thought the voice came from somewhere nearby. Eldon walked towards him when Quinn beckoned him.

"Hello," said Eldon, his confusion, which mixed in with his misery, sounded downright pathetic.

"So, I heard you have a detention with Umbridge."

"Yes."

"You're not feeling great about it, are you?"

"No."

Quinn stared at Eldon for a good moment before patting his shoulders heavily. "Wait here for a bit; I'll be back in a bit. Don't go anywhere."

Eldon watched as Quinn walked away. He didn't have anything to do, so he stayed still, and even if he did, Eldon had no energy to do anything.

After a couple of minutes, Quinn returned but in his hand were two piping hot bacon sandwiches. He handed one to Eldon and took a bite from another one.

"Eat it. You'll feel better," said Quinn.

Eldon looked at his sandwich for a while before looking up and saying,

"What do you want?"

"The detention with Umbridge," said Quinn, "it's not going to be pretty."

"I know that. Who doesn't know that." Detention with Umbridge made it automatically fated to be awful.

"Well, I can make it much more bearable. I can make the next week,

which is supposed to be hellish to feel like normal detention," said Quinn.

Eldon perked up hearing that. It was the greatest proposition he had heard in his entire life, and that was when he was offered the Albus Dumbledore's Chocolate Frog Card in return for some Exploding Snaps, which was a ridiculously good deal.

"What is it?" asked Eldon.

Quinn took out two potion vials from his robes and handed them to Eldon. "Take these two before you go in Umbridge's office, and you'll be set for the day. . . I can give you one of these every day till your detention ends."

"What are these?"

"The less you know, the better, kid."

One was the same potion he had given to Harry before he went for his detentions but with some modification — Harry knew the pain of using the Blood Quill, but Eldon didn't, and even if Quinn gave him one day to experience the pain, there was no telling how good was Eldon's acting were — so he made it so Eldon would feel extreme irritation when using the Blood Quill, that would make his discomfort believable.

The other one was the antidote to the Veritaserum that Umbridge might give to get some blackmail material out. There was no reason for the second one, but it was precautionary. There was no telling what was brewing in Umbridge's twisted mind.

Eldon took the vials and stared at them for a good while before looking up at Quinn. "Will they really work? Are you absolutely sure?"

"One hundred percent. But there's a condition for this."

"What is it?" Eldon was willing to follow if it would make his life easier.

"You can't tell anyone about this. Not a single soul can know that I give you this. If you tell anyone, you'll not be feeling good about it," said

Quinn. Hermione Granger wasn't the only one who could weave in special little traps into things.

"Deal!" said Eldon almost instantly.

"Good, now scurry away and remember the deal," said Quinn and watched Eldon walk to the Hufflepuff entrance with a renewed vigor.

"That's one more," Quinn muttered as Eldon disappeared from his sights.

The more Umbridge dished out detentions, the more people Quinn would get to give the potions, and more detentions meant that the web that the bug spun for him would be more lethal.

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Quinn West - MC - I realize that the difference between Arachne and Bugs.

Filius Flitwick - Head of House - Yeah, I'm not getting fired.

Eldon Pembroke - Hufflepuff - The bacon sandwich was surprisingly good.

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If you have any ideas regarding the magic you want to see in this fiction or want to offer some ideas regarding the progression. Move onto the DISCORD Server and blast those ideas.

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228. Chapter 228: Lonely Fortress

On The Isle

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The Northern sea, a sea of the Atlantic Ocean separating the British Isles

from the continental mainland. It connected the Isles to Netherlands and Belgium, Denmark to Norway, touched the shores of Germany, and even made its way to the lush country of Sweden.

In the sea, on a small island surrounded from all sides with blue, a small, scrappy, splintered wooden boat swayed lightly on the shores with a flimsy braided rope of husk tying it to the simple pier.

The sea was too placid for a sanguine moon that hung above. The birds that flew hastily could feel that the placidity was a sign and rushed to take shelter. There was a storm a-brewing.

The boat began to roll from side to side, and the temperature dipped all of a sudden. Dark clouds obscured the moon. They churned grimly in the night sky, as black as a witch's Sabbath. The mercurial moon flushed with the silver from the thunderhead, casting the shivers of moonlight with a ghostly glow. Underneath the sky and the moon, the rain moved towards the small island and the boat like a Dementor's wraithy veil of despair. A wind blew and winnowed, rippling the surface of the corpse calm sea.

The boat heaved and tossed in the rising, swelling waves. The sea was calling it, but the rope didn't allow, hanging taut — it was as if it knew if the boat left, it would never come back.

The rain-shroud passed by, spitting the harsh tears on the great mirror that reflected the sky. The rain whipped down like crystal nails, and streaky lightning emblazoned the sky. The sea tides rose, the boat jerked and soaked in the northern winds, speeding the impending dome. The lacerating rain stung the rope, the strands snapped one by one — even the unity that made the rope strong couldn't stop nature's wrath roaring edict.

It snapped. It snapped, and the boat heeded the call of Poseidon. It bobbed like a cork upon the capacious sea. The timber planks buckled

and bulged, then screamed and shuddered, but the boat righted herself once more like a brave hero against the bravery.

But the bedlam of the sea wasn't kind nor fair.

The boat rose with the swell, inclining upwards to its destruction. It was propelled up onto the lip and hovered there, a fly-speck on the cobwebbed lines of the wave. Time seemed suspended. The whirlpool gaped under him with dire-white jaws. It roiled and spun, inviting craft in. Then the boat plummeted down into its milky depths, swallowed whole in a final, terrible squeak of timber.

It was then black-shrouded figures began descending from above, surrounded in black sooty smoke of hell. It was as if the pandemonic sky had spit them out. The haze cleared and appeared from within were black-hooded figures with snake-like eye slits covering their faces. All held brooms in their gloved hands as they looked above as the clouds overhead funnelled together and from the middle descended a dense trail of haze blacker than the pits of Tartarus.

The haze landed on the island between the hooded and masked figures, but unlike them, this one wasn't holding a broom — all he wore was a simple loose grey robe over the skeletal frame.

"This cold," said the robed figure, "the touch of despair, a hint of sorrow, and the infinite empty void. . . it can't be found anywhere but in their breeding grounds."

"Avery," said the man with snake-like features. The thunder still struck, and the winds continued to roar, but his voice was as clear on a cloudless day. The rain still poured, trying to drown everything, but not a single drop hit the man.

One of the hooded figures stepped forward and bowed his head.

"Bring the jailers to greet me," said the man, his voice deep, "take Yaxley,

Crabbe, and Goyle with you."

"Yes, master," said Avery and nodded at the three hoods that stepped out.

The four went out to a small outhouse on a raised cliff at the edge of the island.

Flew flashes, and sometime later, the four men returned with four others bound in chains behind them. The rain mixed with the beach sand coated them as they were dragged on the ground while they tried to struggle.

They were dumped right between the encirclement of the hooded individuals.

"Gentlemen," said the master.

The four bound men, Hit Wizards in charge of keeping an eye on the fortress built on the island, looked up from the ground as the rain hit their faces. For a moment, they were confused about what they were looking at — a man with increasingly waxy, reptilian, and bone-white skin.

One of the "jailers" remembered something that he had read in the papers. It was an interview with Albus Dumbledore, and in it, the interviewer had asked Dumbledore to describe the Dark Lord — more than a decade and no pictures of the Dark Lord, so who better to ask but the man who led the opposition to the Tyranny — in that interview, Dumbledore went onto describe the Dark Lord's appearance (the one he had seen in Harry's memories.)

"T-The Da-Dark Lord!" said the Hit Wizard in horrid exclamation.

"You're correct, Hit Wizard," said Voldemort, "it is indeed I, the Dark Lord . . . Voldemort."

A chill went down the four jailers' spines as their hearts started to thump inside their chests; suddenly, the early February rain wasn't cold; the heat of fear filled their bodies. The realization of the fact what Dumbledore

was speaking for months was indeed true came crashing down on him.

"I have some very important things to do at your place of work, gentlemen," said Voldemort, "unfortunately for all of you, your presence is a hindrance. As such, all of you will have to go."

The thin and long fingers took out the thing that felt the most comfortable in Voldemort's hands and held it with the gentlest of the touch, a picture of serenity. On the contrary, the four Hit Wizards in charge were thrashing on the ground at the sight of the Dark Lord brandishing a wand.

The last thing the Hit Wizards heard was the whisper — "Avada Kedavra" — and the last memories of their lives were tainted and overwhelmed by the bright flash of AK-green.

Not a moment after the four deaths, Edward Nott stepped forward and spoke, "We will start, my lord," and took out his own wand. But Voldemort raised his hands and stopped his Death Eaters as all of them took out their wands to charge the fortress.

"I'll take care of this myself," said Voldemort, "my most loyal of servants," all Death Eaters lowered their eyes, "deserve for me to be freed by my own hand — they have kept the integrity of my name alive in these hallowed halls for more than a decade — they have earned to be rewarded, to be honored, to feel the first touch of unfettered air and know in an instant that it was me. . . . Not to mention, if you all go inside, you will only be hindrances — the real jailors will consume all intruders without a second of delay."

The Death Eaters shivered. Every single of them knew the despairing touch of a Dementor felt. Barty Crouch Sr., during his campaign to put every Death Eater behind bars, had made Dementors escort them while they were under arrest. The now-dead man was vindictive to the limit in

his golden days and had made sure that their brief time in the chains with the Auror Office was as unpleasant as he could possibly make it. Voldemort stared straight ahead at the triangular monolithic tower. It was made from black stone covering every inch of the building. He had only once visited this island and that too for a very short period. During his reign, when no one dared to even speak his name, his servants roamed freely and without consequence. There was no need for him to ever step on this island. So he took a moment and gazed at the world's most horrid wizarding prison — the fortress of Azkaban.

The island in the North Sea on which the wizard prison was built had never appeared on any map, wizard or Muggle. Its first known resident, Ektrizdis, practiced the worst kinds of Dark magic and constructed a fortress on the island, luring Muggle sailors there to torture and murder them. After his death, the various concealment charms placed on the island faded, and the Ministry of Magic became aware of the mysterious site's existence. Those who entered the deserted fortress to investigate discovered, among other horrors, an infestation of Dementors.

The wizarding authorities of the time considered destroying the fortress, but, fearing reprisal by the dark entities or the island itself, decided against such action, and the Ministry allowed the sizeable colony to remain; the island was thus left unmolested and unchecked for many years, decades until the International Statute of Secrecy was established. Due to the impracticality of using small, local prisons, which could result in bangs, smells, and light shows if inmates escaped, plans for a single, purpose-built wizarding prison on some remote Hebridean island were made at the passing of the International Statute of Secrecy. However, when Damocles Rowle was elected Minister for Magic in 1718, he insisted on using Azkaban instead, seeing the Dementors as a potential

asset: putting them to work as guards would save expense, time, and lives. This plan was eventually put into motion and, despite protests, Azkaban was made the magical prison of Britain, and Rowle's decision was a major success as Azkaban showed a zero breakout rate for centuries.

During his term, Minister Eldritch Diggory visited Azkaban and was horrified at the inhumane levels of despair and insanity that the Dementors induced in the prisoners. He formed a committee to find alternative solutions or mitigating measures, the least of which was to remove the Dementors; even this, however, met opposition from those who feared a mainland invasion if the Dementors were deprived of their food source. Diggory died of Dragon Pox while in office, and thus the campaign to find an alternative to Azkaban's Dementors stalled.

Reversing his predecessor's position, when Minister Hesperaestus Gore took office, the prison was renovated and reinforced — shedding its fortress-like appearance and turning it into the triangular monolith and had remained the same way. . . till today.

Voldemort raised his wand towards the tower. Three energy orbs of blood-red muddled with black manifested and flew out to place themselves in a triangular position one meter apart from each other. The red light from the orbs cast a glow on Voldemort's indifferent face.

The orbs began violently vibrating, and the Death Eaters all took a step back. Three beams of crushing power, one from each, came crashing into each other at the mid-point of the triangle, and the shaking reached a peak before the spell went still — like the calm before the storm — the very next second, a concentrated beam discharged out from the mid-point towards the fortress.

For a second, nothing happened. Then came a zapping sound —

Voldemort's spell had crossed the sound barrier. After a streak of red electric bolts covered the surface of the tower. There was another couple of seconds pause before the exterior of the monolithic building started to crack. With every passing second, the cracks grew, and rubble began falling — big and small — but it kept falling.

A flurry of screeches followed after as hooded wraiths in hundreds began flying out the tower and more began descended down from the chaotic clouds. The Death Eater brigade clutched their wands in nervousness as the screeching tattered robes formed a dark dome surrounding the island. Only Voldemort seemed unconcerned.

He lazily flicked his wand, and fans of yellowish-brown flames began flying out in waves over waves, crashing out into the dome of Dementors. Louder screeches filled the sky — but now they were of pain and fear. Patronus spell was the mainstream spell of choice to handle Dementors, and if used correctly, it did amazingly well. But a Patronus was a gentle option. There were spells on the dark spectrum that could be used against the Dementors — the wraiths were amortal and couldn't be killed, but that didn't mean that they couldn't be made to feel pain and fear.

After half a minute, Voldemort stopped and lowered his wand hand. A small smile appeared on his face as he saw a single Dementor fly out from the tower and float in front of him. It screeched harshly.

"Submit to me, and I will let you feed," said Voldemort. "You will be able to feed more than you and your kind have ever done on this island. This is a prison, and if you submit, I will free you from it. Refuse and I will plunge you into the pits of agony beyond imagination."

The Dementor hovered in his place for a good while before bowing its hooded head. As it did that, the Dementors dome crumbled and the wraiths flew away.

"Now, come to out. . . it's time to return home," said Voldemort gazing at the tower in shambles. Another smile appeared on his face as he saw a familiar figure step out into the open.

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One day she was at the top of the world, serving her beloved master from the bottom of her heart, seeding chaos and destruction, spreading the fire of her master's terror. Those were the best days of her life — she had found the purpose of her and was living the dream every single second of her life. But then, one day, everything came crashing down as her beloved lord, the one who she would do anything, disappeared. He had gone to take care of something on his own, but he never returned. The whispers that he was dead reached her ears, but she knew that it wasn't true. She knew that he was out there, needing her help.

However, before she could go out to help her master, she was captured by the filthy Aurors, and before she knew it, she was in Azkaban — the worst day of her life — not because of the Dementors, they weren't a problem — it was the day she was barred away from helping her master.

The next decade she spent in her prison wasn't bad. The Dementors were a bit pesky, but they were cute trying to push her into gloom — it seemed that they didn't know who she was — she was Despair; their attempts meant nothing to her. They tried to suck out her happiness, but all it did was bring out her memories with her beloved master, but they weren't able to suck them out — she didn't allow it — it wasn't allowed. Then one day, the only mark on her body that had faded away over time began darkening and returned to how she remembered it was during

happy times.

Her master, her lord, her everything had returned.

From that day forward, she waited in eagerness for the day her master would come to get her.

And then one cold day (like every day), the Dementors were bothering her (like every day), but then they suddenly went as the tower began shaking — it had never shaken like it did today. In the blink of an eye, the roof and wall of her home (her cell) crumbled away, leaving her to see the sight of the sky for the first time ever in thirteen years. Even when they had changed her cell, they had blinded her for the time she was outside.

She finally had an image in her eyes to match the sound of waves she heard every day from her cell. She slowly stepped out towards the edge and just took in everything.

Then she heard the voice she had been waiting to hear. It was just a whisper, but it was everything.

"Time to return home, Bellatrix."

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"My lord."

Voldemort turned away from talking to Bellatrix Lestrange and turned to Peter Pettigrew, who called out to him.

"Speak, Wormtail."

"The thing I talked about to you before," said Peter, "about talking someone else with us."

They were here to take the imprisoned Death Eaters, but Peter wanted to take someone else with them.

"So, where is this boy you want to take with us?" Voldemort asked. He didn't care what happened to the other prisoners. They could die for all he could care or make it to the mainland and do anything they wanted, which happening was low with the island being surrounded by the Northern sea, and the Dementor-treated prisoners couldn't bring out magic even if they did try to attempt apparition without wands.

"Bring him here," said Peter.

Two Death Eaters dragged a sickly-looking man, holding him up with his arms around their shoulders as the man couldn't stand on his own.

Voldemort wasn't impressed. All his imprisoned Death Eaters were able to stand and walk, albeit weakly, after more than a decade in Azkaban.

This one didn't look he had been in prison for even half of that.

"What is your name, boy, speak," said Voldemort impatiently.

The man feebly raised his head to look at Voldemort and gazed at the Dark Lord with his dead eyes. He opened his mouth, and a raspy voice escaped his chipped lips.

"Rivers Lock."

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Voldemort - Dark Lord - "Looking into my eyes, Rivers Lock."

Bellatrix Lestrange - Free at last - Dementors are cute.

Peter Pettigrew - Recommender - Always thinking, always planning.

Rivers Lock - Novellus Accionites(defunct) - Ex-Leader.

FictionOnlyReader - Author - Oh yeah, I liked this chapter a lot.

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If you have any ideas regarding the magic you want to see in this fiction or want to offer some ideas regarding the progression. Move onto the DISCORD Server and blast those ideas.

The link is in the bio!

### Break-In

If you want to read ahead of the posting schedule then head over to my Patreón.

All the chapters would still be posted here, but you can support me with a donation and get chapters earlier than usual as a bonus.

[Link in the Bio/Profile](#)

Quinn stared at the spread newspaper on the table in front of him, looking at the eleven black-and-white photographs that filled the whole of the front page, ten showing men's faces and the eleventh, a women's. Some of the people in the photographs were silently jeering; others were tapping their fingers on the frame of their pictures, looking insolent. The one face familiar to Quinn stared ahead without an expression. Each picture was captioned with a name and the crime for which the person had been sent to Azkaban.

Antonin Dolohov, read the legend beneath a wizard with a long, pale, twisted face who was sneering up at Harry, convicted of the brutal murders of Gideon and Fabian Prewett.

Augustus Rookwood, said the caption beneath a pockmarked man with greasy hair who was leaning against the edge of his picture, looking bored, convicted of leaking Ministry of Magic Secrets to He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named.

Quinn's attention, although were drawn to the sole woman and one man. The woman's face had leapt out at him the moment he had seen the page. She had long, dark hair that looked unkempt and straggly in the picture, though he had seen it sleek, thick, and shining. She glared up at him through heavily lidded eyes, an arrogant, disdainful smile playing around her thin mouth. Somehow, she retained vestiges of fabulous good looks,

but something — perhaps Azkaban — had taken most of her beauty.

Bellatrix LeStrange, convicted of the torture and permanent incapacitation of Frank and Alice Longbottom.

The man, on the other hand, seemed indifferent and wasn't even looking into the camera while the mugshot was being clicked. His dead eyes seemed to look into the distance.

Rivers Lock, spoke the legend beneath the pale dead-eyed young man, convicted of abduction of Harry Potter, The-Boy-Who-Lived, breaking-and-entering at Hogwarts, and endangering lives of Hogwarts students.

Quinn sighed as his eyes went up towards the headline over the pictures he hadn't read because of the photographs.

MASS BREAKOUT FROM AZKABAN MINISTRY FEARS PETTIGREW IS "RALLYING POINT" FOR OLD DEATH EATERS

"This shit is bonkers," said Eddie. "Eleven Death Eaters out of Azkaban. . . and Peter Pettigrew, the man's at the peak of his popularity."

"Read the article," said Marcus, "Fudge commented on it."

The Ministry of Magic announced late last night that there has been a mass breakout from Azkaban.

Speaking to reporters in his private office, Cornelius Fudge, Minister of Magic, confirmed that eleven high-security prisoners escaped in the early hours of yesterday evening and that he has already informed the Muggle Prime Minister of the dangerous nature of these individuals.

"We find ourselves, most unfortunately, in the same position we were two and a half years ago when the murderer Peter Pettigrew escaped," said Fudge last night. "Nor do we think the two breakouts are unrelated. An escape of this magnitude suggests outside help, and we must remember that Pettigrew, as the first person ever to break out of Azkaban, would be ideally placed to help others follow in his footsteps. We think it likely

that these individuals, who include He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named's right-hand witch, Bellatrix LeStrange, have rallied around Pettigrew as their leader. We are, however, doing all we can to round up the criminals and beg the magical community to remain alert and cautious. On no account should any of these individuals be approached."

"Bullshit," said Eddie scoffing, "complete and utter bullshit."

"What other options does he have?" said Marcus critically. "He can hardly say, 'Sorry everyone, Dumbledore warned me this might happen, the Azkaban guards have joined You-Know-Who, and now his worst supporters have broken out too.' I mean, he's spent a good six months telling everyone you and Dumbledore are liars, hasn't he?"

Marcus ripped open the newspaper and began to read the report inside while Quinn looked around the Great Hall. His fellow students were not looking scared or at least discussing the terrible piece of news on the front page, but very few of them took the newspaper every day like he and Marcus. There they all were, talking about homework and Quidditch and who knew what other stuff, and outside these walls ten more Death Eaters along with a neo-Death Eater (Novellus Accionite) had swollen the Dark Lord's ranks. . .

He glanced up at the staff table. It was a different story here: Dumbledore and McGonagall were deep in conversation, both looking extremely grave. Sprout had the Prophet propped against a bottle of ketchup and was reading the front page with such concentration that she was not noticing the gentle drip of egg yolk falling into her lap from her stationary spoon. Flitwick had stood up on his chair (atop his chair) and was hunched over the newspaper, his face at point-blank range.

Meanwhile, at the far end of the table, Umbridge was tucking into a bowl of porridge. For once, her pouchy toad's eyes were not sweeping the

Great Hall looking for misbehaving students. She scowled as she gulped down her food, and every now and then, she shot a malevolent glance up the table to where Dumbledore and McGonagall were talking so intently.

"Oh my —" said Marcus wonderingly, still staring at the newspaper.

"What?" said Quinn.

He folded back page-ten of the newspaper and handed it back to Quinn and Eddie.

#### TRAGIC DEMISE OF MINISTRY OF MAGIC WORKER

St. Mungo's Hospital promised a full inquiry last night after Ministry of Magic worker Broderick Bode, 78, was discovered dead in his bed, strangled by a potted plant. Healers called to the scene were unable to revive Mr. Bode, who had been injured in a workplace accident some weeks prior to his death.

Healer Miriam Strout, who was in charge of Mr. Bode's ward at the time of the incident, has been suspended on full pay and was unavailable for comment yesterday, but a spokeswizard for the hospital said in a statement, "St.

Mungo's profoundly regrets the death of Mr. Bode, whose health was improving steadily prior to this tragic accident.

"We have strict guidelines on the decorations permitted on our wards, but it appears that Healer Strout, busy over the Christmas period, overlooked the dangers of the plant on Mr. Bode's bedside table. As his speech and mobility improved, Healer Strout encouraged Mr. Bode to look after the plant himself, unaware that it was not an innocent Flitterbloom, but a cutting of Devil's Snare, which, when touched by the convalescent Mr. Bode, throttled him instantly.

"St. Mungo's is as yet unable to account for the presence of the plant on the ward and asks any witch or wizard with information to come forward."

"Bode. . ." said Quinn.

"You know him?" asked Eddie.

"Bode. It rings a bell. . . ah, yeah, I remember, Broderick Bode, the man was an Unspeakable, worked in the Department of Mysteries," said Quinn nodding as his memory provided, "I met him in passing at a party with grandfather — he seemed like a jolly man. . . a pity."

"A Flitterbloom turning out to be a Devil's Snare. . . that sounds oddly suspicious," said Eddie, "you said he's an Unspeakable? Maybe someone wanted to kill him?"

No one knew that Eddie was indeed right, and Broderick Bode's death was indeed an attempt to seal his lips with the strangle of death.

The newspaper was set in between Quinn and Eddie as both read it, but suddenly a blonde head of Luna Lovegood dipped in between them.

"Broderick Bode. . ." said Luna, her eyes sparkling; she picked up the newspaper and read it with unblinking eyes.

Eddie and Quinn looked at one another, then to Luna, who straightened up, closed the paper, and started to walk away.

"To send a letter to daddy," she said. "Broderick Bode, Flitterbloom, and Devil's Snare. . ." Luna was already in her own world, switching from fourth-year Ravenclaw to Quibbler columnist.

"Let's hope she doesn't trip and fall on her face," said Eddie, following Luna with his eyes.

Quinn guffawed shortly, recalling when he, Eddie, and Marcus had seen Luna trip out and plant her face right into the mud because she wasn't paying attention to where she was going. Luna's only reaction was that it had been a while since she tasted dirt and how it tasted different from when she was a child.

"So, Marcus, how do you think this's going to turn out?" asked Quinn as he dabbed the corner of his mouth with a handkerchief, curious about Marcus' thought on the matter.

Marcus stared at the newspaper for a good moment. "Well, Dumbledore's reputation is about to take a good ride on a broom — up and up. With this, it would be difficult for the Ministry to keep their stance that You-Know-Who isn't alive — the public support would start to tilt towards Dumbledore's side," he glanced up at the staff table, "Ministry would yet again try to suppress the news, but I don't think it would work as well this time around."

Quinn nodded. The breakout was the breakpoint that was always lingering in the background. Before this point, Fudge couldn't be blamed for his refusal to believe that Voldemort had returned — there was no other evidence other than Harry Potter saying that he had seen Voldemort. But now, the breakout was indeed enough reason for Fudge to at least sit down with Dumbledore and sort the matter out.

'But the swamp of politics won't let Fudge go, and neither does Fudge want to exit what he thinks is the key to power,' thought Quinn sighing; people were emotional (he wasn't any exception), but the sight of emotions muddling minds was never a good sight.

"The next couple of weeks are going to be interesting ones," said Quinn.

The next couple of weeks, there was only one topic of conversation in the corridors now: the ten escaped Death Eaters, whose story had finally filtered through the school from those few people who read the newspapers. Rumors were flying that some of the convicts had been spotted in Hogsmeade, that they were supposed to be hiding out in the Shrieking Shack, and that they were going to break into Hogwarts, just like the eleventh escapee Rivers Lock had done.

Those who came from Wizarding families had grown up hearing the names of these Death Eaters spoken with almost as much fear as Voldemort's; the crimes they had committed during the days of

Voldemort's reign of terror were legendary. There were relatives of their victims among the Hogwarts students, who now found themselves the unwilling objects of a gruesome sort of reflected fame as they walked the corridors.

Susan Bones eclipsed Harry Potter in popularity because she had an uncle, aunt, and cousins who had all died at the hands of one of the ten. And that her aunt, guardian, and only living family member, Amelia Bones, was the Head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement — many hounded her wanting to know what the DMLE was doing to catch the escaped convicts.

The sudden pressure increase on the poor Hufflepuff was so much that Quinn had decided to pair her with Harry in a DA meeting to alleviate some stress. The girl had said miserably that she now had a good idea what it felt like to be Harry.

"And I don't know how you stand it; it's horrible," she said bluntly, putting a bit too much power into her Banishing charm that Harry had to actually put in some effort to defend himself.

It was true that Harry was the subject of much renewed muttering and pointing in the corridors these days, yet he thought he detected a slight difference in the tone of the whisperers' voices. They sounded curious rather than hostile now, and once or twice he was sure he overheard snatches of conversation that suggested that the speakers were not satisfied with the Prophet's version of how and why ten Death Eaters had managed to break out of Azkaban fortress. In their confusion and fear, these doubters now seemed to be turning to the only other explanation available to them, the one that Harry and Dumbledore had been expounding since the previous year.

It was not only the students' mood that had changed. It was now quite

common to come across two or three teachers conversing in low, urgent whispers in the corridors, breaking off their conversations the moment they saw students approaching.

"They obviously can't talk freely in the staffroom anymore," said Quinn nonchalantly, as he, Eddie, and Marcus passed McGonagall, Flitwick, and Sprout huddled together outside the Charms classroom one day. "Not with Umbridge there."

"Reckon they know anything new?" said Eddie, gazing back over his shoulder at the three teachers.

"If they do, we're not going to hear about it, are we?" said Harry angrily.

"Not after Decree . . . What number are we on now?"

For new signs had appeared on the house notice boards the morning after news of the Azkaban breakout:

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#### EDUCATIONAL DECREE - NO. FORTY-NINE

- By Order Of -

The High Inquisitor of Hogwarts

Teachers are hereby banned from giving students any information that is not strictly related to the subjects they are paid to teach.

The above is in accordance with Educational Decree Number Forty-Nine.

Signed:

Dolores Jane Umbridge

High Inquisitor

- Ministry of Magic -

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This latest decree had been the subject of a great number of jokes among the students. Lee Jordan had pointed out to Umbridge that by the terms of the new rule, she was not allowed to tell Fred and George off for

playing Exploding Snap in the back of the class.

"Exploding Snap's got nothing to do with Defense Against the Dark Arts, Professor! That's not information relating to your subject!"

When Quinn next saw Lee, the back of his hand was bleeding rather severely, but the Gryffindor was smiling widely as he shook two empty potion vials — a standard care package that every Umbridge detention attendee got from Quinn.

Many had thought that the breakout from Azkaban might have humbled Umbridge a little, that she might have been abashed at the catastrophe that had occurred right under her beloved Fudge's nose. It seemed, however, to have only intensified her furious desire to bring every aspect of life at Hogwarts under her personal control.

She seemed determined at the very least to achieve a sacking before long — Quinn had listened on her as she toad-huffed in her office.

Every single Divination and Care of Magical Creatures lesson was now conducted in the presence of Umbridge and her clipboard.

She lurked by the fire in the heavily perfumed tower room, interrupting Trelawney's increasingly hysterical talks with difficult questions about Ornithomancy and Heptomology, insisting that she predict students' answers before they gave them and demanding that she demonstrate her skill at the crystal ball, the tea leaves, and the runestones in turn.

Umbridge even dared spend more time in Hagrid's creature farms than any other student in Hogwarts. She braved staying close to even the stinkiest of Hagrid's beast just so that she could maximize the harassment she could punch into Hagrid, and it seemed to work because Hagrid was oddly distracted and jumpy in lessons, losing the thread of what he was saying while talking to the class, answering questions wrongly and glancing anxiously at Umbridge all the time — seemingly lost his nerves.

The third one to be targeted by Umbridge's constant hounding was Lily Potter, but Umbridge didn't disturb Lily as she did Trelawney and Hagrid — she just sat in the back of the class and stared at Lily without saying a single word, but there was something brewing and everyone who attended the Muggle Studies class knew that Umbridge was planning something.

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It was the end of another DA meeting, and Quinn exited the Room of Requirements, closing it behind him as his duty of the room manager. He stared at the crowd of people slowly drifting away. It was late at night, and after another session with drillmaster Quinn, everyone simply wanted to collapse on their beds and go to sleep.

"Good work, everyone. I look forward to meeting you all in the next session. Please make sure to revise and keep the magic alive," said Quinn, his voice reaching into everyone's ears without leaking into the surrounding.

"Come on, let's go," said Eddie as he cracked his neck.

"I've work to do," said Quinn as they walked towards the Grand Staircase.

"work-work, or work-work?" asked Luna.

"work-work," said Quinn.

"Return before it's too late," said Marcus.

"Yes, mum."

On the sixth floor, Quinn separated from the group and silently made his way to the entrance of the Architect's Vault. He took out the teal ring from his pocket and slipped it on. The teal ringlet appeared on the wall, and Quinn touched the teal gem in the center of the ringlet, opening the

swerving teal portal through which he effortlessly slipped in like he had done so many times.

As soon as he entered the first room, Quinn sighed, staring at the erect pedestal — it was always up whenever he entered. It was fun a couple of times, but after that, he was sick of it.

He conjured a floating silver disc and sat on it, his legs crossed. He was sick of all the shaking that happened while he solved the mechanism was utterly annoying.

Quinn raised a hand and placed it on one of the pillars that held up the roof. He was about to channel some magic to kick start the process when he heard a loud gasp of surprise. Quinn froze on his silver disc and slowly turned towards the source of the human gasp, which he knew didn't come out of him.

Quinn saw a head of red hair. She was looking at the swirling teal portal so he could only see her back, but there was no doubt in his mind about the person's identity.

She turned towards him with an utterly surprised expression, and Quinn's closed his eyes, mentally preparing himself for what was about to come.

". . . Quinn, what is this room?" she asked.

Quinn took a deep breath and opened his eyes to her standing before him.

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Quinn West - MC - Trying to keep his inner-Eddie from coming out.

Intruder - Surprised - There are a couple of options.

FictionOnlyReader - Author - Well, this is how it went. Wait for the next chapter, people, before trying to break my head. Remember, patience's the key.

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If you have any ideas regarding the magic you want to see in this fiction or want to offer some ideas regarding the progression. Move onto the DISCORD Server and blast those ideas.

The link is in the bio!

230. Chapter 230: Giving A

Private Tour

If you want to read ahead of the posting schedule then head over to my Patreón.

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Link in the Bio/Profile

For the most part, Quinn associated the vaults with quiet — except for a case or two, he had gotten used to spending hours after hours doing his work in utter silence. He had become comfortable in it. But after a very long time, Quinn felt that the silence was entirely uncomfortable — right now, he felt that the Architect's Vault's first room was more silent than Tehom's Delight.

"Quinn?" she said again.

He stared at her blankly. His brain ran at full speed, threatening to overheat, but at the same time, it was drawing blanks regarding the situation in front of him. At the same time, a small portion at the back of his head was screaming a screeching emergency signal right at him.

Obliviate! Obliviate! Obliviate! Obliviate! Obliviate! Obliviate!

But he knew that wasn't going to be an option — not for him.

Quinn stepped down from the silver disc, and his legs were very unhappy that they were being used. His entire body felt unhappy. For four years, he had kept this all to himself, but all that came crashing with just one person stepping through a wall.

'What the hell was the Architect thinking? Why doesn't she need a ring?' he thought. The shock and surprise of seeing her here gave way to anger about his carelessness — a detection ward at the start of the corridor outside was all it would've taken.

"Ivy," there was a good pause before he continued, "I'll be honest with you, but this reminds me of the time you broke into my office."

Ivy Potter, the repeat intruder, stilled in surprise, remembering the aftermath of the break-in.

"Don't worry," said Quinn, seeing the expression on Ivy's face, "this and that are two different situations. . . though I can't say I'm not feeling angry," he looked around the vault, "this isn't my property, though I'm the current challenger."

Ivy lowered her eyes. She had followed Quinn, her curiosity getting the best of her. With hindsight, she could've just asked Quinn about it at a later time, but thinking about that now was worthless.

Quinn sat down on the steps leading to the pedestal and patted the spot next to him. Ivy gingerly followed and sat beside him. Quinn didn't speak for a good time while Ivy sat beside him, feeling a tiny bit awkward.

He was angry and wanted to shout at Ivy about intruding on his privacy. But the shock of the vault's existence being found made him trigger his Occlumency out of panic.

In his first year, Recon was birthed in Hogwarts and became possibly the most significant breach of personal privacy that ever existed in the history of Hogwarts. Every morning Quinn had ever visited the Great Hall for breakfast, he had used Legilimency to spy on people. On multiple occasions, Quinn had used audio transmitting chips to listen in on conversations. Just this year, he had planted a recording device in a person's room (even though it was Umbridge) and broke into her office

repeatedly using Recon to change the tapes.

'Damn Occlumency, dulling my hypocrisy!' he thought.

"I suppose you were curious?" said Quinn after calming himself down.

Ivy nodded her head.

"When did you find out about this?" he asked.

"Before Christmas. You suddenly disappeared between the seventh and fifth floor, and then almost every week, you vanished after the DA meetings ended," Ivy fiddled with her finger.

"Before Christmas?! For that long? Damn. . . no wonder you were so curious," said Quinn, "But, I'd say, Ivy, don't just barge into places you have no idea about with a care in the world — you might seriously get injured — Hogwarts, as you know, isn't as safe as it's said out to be."

Ivy once again nodded; she had her own share of experience with dangerous rooms — the Philosopher's Stone chambers, the Chamber of Secrets (though she was petrified), and an office occupied by a protective owner. Two of three times, she had actively entered the dangerous rooms on her own accord.

"What's this place?" she asked, seeing that Quinn wasn't exceedingly angry or at least wasn't showing it.

Quinn turned to Ivy and stared at her.

"W-What?" said Ivy, feeling conscious because of Quinn's intense gaze.

"You will have to promise not to tell anyone about it. If I am to tell you about this, you will have to promise me not to share this with anyone — not a single soul can know about the existence of this room. If you can't give me that, I will suggest that you exit this room and pretend that it never existed."

There was the option of kicking Ivy out without telling her anything. But curiosity killed the cat, and Ivy Potter was one curious cat.

"I promise you I won't tell anyone," said Ivy.

"Alright then, don't make me regret this," said Quinn before starting.

"This is a special room, of course, as you have found through the situation, it's hidden from the general public of Hogwarts — the Professors, the students, the house-elves, no one knows about them. . . about the Cursed Vaults."

"Cursed Vaults?"

"Uh-huh, Cursed Vaults, forgotten through the annals of time, only known to a select few," Quinn sported a smile, feeling proud about being this part of history. "This vault that we are standing in is made by Stigweard Gragg."

"The Architect?" said Ivy, recalling the name instantly, "you were reading his biography — Luna brought it for you."

"You have a good memory. Yes, I did read that. I read it because of this vault — the Architect's Vault."

"How did you find this place?" asked Ivy, looking at the plain room; the only thing that stood out to her was the teal portal behind her and the pedestal in front.

"The Hufflepuff ghost, Friar, is the one who told me about it," said Quinn, "he dropped me off at a starting point for me to make my way to this room," Quinn showed Ivy his ring, "I found this ring — it's the Architect's ring — it led me to this room, and from October, I have been coming here to this place. . ."

"But why? I mean, what is in here for you?" asked Ivy, looking around.

"I don't know," said Quinn, "I don't know what awaits me, but I do think it will be worth the time. This was constructed by Stigweard Gragg, and he put in some effort to hide it, so I'm guessing there must be something worthwhile."

Quinn got up from the step he was sitting on. Took out his fake wand to conjure the same silver disc he had conjured before, but this time it was big enough for two people. He turned to Ivy and extended his hand towards her.

"Come on," he said.

Ivy got up, held Quinn's hand as he pulled her up on the silver disc.

"What are you going to do?" she asked.

"I'm going to quench your curiosity," said Quinn. He turned to the pillar beside and put the wand tip on the stone to inject the magic to get the process started.

"What do you mea—"

The entire room started to shake like an earthquake was passing by.

Quinn, of course, wasn't surprised, but the same couldn't be said for Ivy as she "eeked" when the room started trembling, setting off some dust from the ceiling, and even though she was off the ground and couldn't feel the quakes, the noise was enough to scare her and grabbed the nearest support she could — which happened to Quinn.

"Woah," exclaimed Quinn as he reflexively wrapped his free arm around Ivy as she grabbed onto him.

"What is happening?!" yelled Ivy loudly, her grip tightening, "Is the room going to collapse?! Are we going to die?!"

"What? No, of course not."

But Ivy seemed not to listen as she clutched into a death hold and showed no signs of leaving him. All Quinn could do was leave her be and continue solving the mechanism.

After the shaking stopped, the pedestal completely sunk in, and the archway staircase revealed that Quinn breathed out a sigh and looked at Ivy. She didn't seem cognizant of the fact that the shaking had stopped

and was still holding on to him.

She's cute, a thought passed through Quinn's mind as he gazed at her.

"Ivy. . . Ivy, it's over," he said.

Prompted by her name being called, Ivy finally opened her eyes and cautiously/doubtfully looked around, and everything had indeed stopped shaking. Then realized her position, and her heart skipped a beat as she forced down the red from coming up on her face. Her finger loosened the hold on Quinn's shirt, but she didn't step away from him. . . or to be more accurate, she couldn't.

"Uhm. . . you hand," she said.

"My hand?" Quinn looked at his left arm, and to his surprise, his left arm was wrapped around Ivy's waist. "Oh! I'm sorry." Quinn immediately removed his hand from Ivy, and she took a small step away from him.

Quinn lowered the silver disc to the ground, and both stepped off.

Wanting to quickly move on, Quinn directed Ivy's attention to the changes in the room. "Well, what do you think?" he said.

Ivy took her eyes off the ground and too pushed the thoughts about the closeness to Quinn away for a later time and gazed around the room.

"That thing in the middle is gone," she said and then pointed at the revealed staircase. "That wasn't there before! What's in there?" She sounded like an excited child.

"How about we go and check it out."

Both of them reached the staircase, and with a wave of Quinn's fake wand, the entire staircase lit up.

"Isn't this cool?" said Quinn.

"How did this appear?" asked Ivy. "Why did the room shake?"

"It would be better if I show you," said Quinn, "I'll be casting a little magic on you, alright?"

When he got the permission, Quinn cast illusion magic on Ivy and showed her what he could see through his Earth sense.

"W-Wow!" Ivy could suddenly see the entire mechanism that was inside the vault walls. "This is. . . wow — what magic you're using?"

"I'm using illusion magic. The entire vault room is a safe that needs to be solved to reveal this hidden doorway. All the shaking was the parts being moved around," said Quinn in explanation and then went into a bit of detail.

"Now, how about we go to the next room," said Quinn.

Maybe it was because Quinn finally had someone to share the vaults with that he was feeling more loose-lipped than usual and told Ivy about the bits and pieces of knowledge that he learned while learning Earth magic and things about the Architect he had read.

In the second room of the Architect's vault, Quinn once again sent out hundreds of light orbs into the air and to every corner to light up the enormous space.

"Welcome to what I like to call — Cuboidal Creation," said Quinn. He had also named the first room the "Hidden Lock."

"Cuboidal Creation?" asked Ivy.

"Yes, come on, let me show you what this room is all about."

Quinn led Ivy to the edge, looking down at the chasm.

"There are two ways we can do this," said Quinn, "we can go down slow on a silver-disc like before, or we can go down the fun way."

"The fun way," said Ivy immediately.

Quinn looked at Ivy approvingly. "Excellent, that's spirited. Life's all about having fun. I like your style, Ivy Potter. . . so don't blame me."

"Blame you, why? — Aaaaah!" Quinn grabbed Ivy by her hands and pulled her along as he stepped off the edge and down.

Both fell down, with Ivy screaming while her mind out while Quinn grinned as he watched her while falling. Near the end, Quinn used Arresto Momentum on himself and Ivy to land them neatly on the ground. Ivy's knees, though, weren't in agreement. She collapsed on the floor, heaving because of the shock.

The redhead glared up at Quinn, "That wasn't fun! You could've given me a warning or. . . or — ugh!" She stood up and hit Quinn on his shoulder as hard as she could.

"Sorry, sorry!" Quinn laughed.

After Ivy calmed down, she looked at the comparison apparatus in the middle of the chasm and a cube sticking out of the floor (he had already cleared out the wall cubes). Unlike the first room, the things in the second room didn't reset every time he exited.

"The objective of this room is to create replicas of the shape that the room asks for," said Quinn, "you see the cube sticking out of the wall, I need to take material out of it and. . . that strange shape on the small stand, yeah that one, I need to make an exact replica down to the smallest millimeter."

"Can I try?" asked Ivy.

"Sure, let's see. . ." Quinn looked around for a material cube with an easy-to-mold material. He pulled two lumps out of one of the cubes and shaped one into a simple cube before placing both the cube and the lump on the ground.

"Shape the lump into the cube," said Quinn while sitting next to the cube and the lump.

Ivy sat down on the ground and took out her wand. She observed the objects in front of her with intent, intelligence flashing in her eyes.

While Transmutation wasn't exclusively taught in Hogwarts, magic

disciplines often intersected — Transfiguration had plenty of similarities with Transmutation, so the task to shape the lump of rock into a shape shouldn't be difficult for Ivy.

Quinn silently sighed. The replication task was easy enough, and anyone with decent skill could do it, but it wouldn't be a vault without a twist thrown in.

'The material cubes are getting tougher,' he thought.

Every cube in the room was made from a different stone. Every successive cube had something different from the previous one, and after going through dozens after dozens of cubes, the materials were becoming stranger, more difficult to mold, trickier to manipulate — Quinn had even started to suspect there was an alchemist behind the creation of these cubes.

Not only that, the shapes were getting trickier. There were multiple angles, oddly shaped faces, edges that suddenly flowed into curves.

'The latest one even had pockets of air inside. Internals are no longer going to be completely solid, aren't they?' If Quinn's prediction were to come true, then the task's difficulty would rocket up abruptly and keep on rising as the internal structure continued to change.

'Let's see who's better, eh, Architect,' thought Quinn, his competitive side raising its head against a dead man.

"I'm done."

Quinn left his thoughts behind. Sitting in front of him were two cubes.

"Hmm. . . let's see how you did." Quinn picked up the cubes and inserted his magic into the cubes — he could see what Ivy had done; it was methodical and both practically and theoretically sound.

"Ivy Potter. . . you know how to apply yourself. . . this is perfect," said Quinn, "there's not a single ounce of Transfiguration in here, nothing

temporary, this cube is entirely in a stable state. . . well done."

Quinn smiled heartedly. The fact that she could eliminate Transfiguration out completely in a task that she was just given was proof of sound conceptual knowledge.

"So, can I help you here?" This was her chance to spend more time with Quinn. Hermione had told her about what Eddie Carmichael and Marcus Beby thought about Quinn, and she knew Daphne liked Quinn — so if she was able to spend time with Quinn, here in a place that seemed to be a tightly held secret, it would allow her to become closer to Quinn.

"No." The answer was prompt, concise, and straightforward. "The reason I told you about this is that I wanted to satisfy your curiosity and make you leave — the Cursed Vaults are close to my hearts; they're special to me, and I don't want that to change — allowing you would change that. . . So I'm sorry, but you can't be here."

Ivy pursed her lips and sighed. At least, she tried.

"But how about this?" said Quinn; he was feeling generous. "If it's possible, then I'll bring you to the end of the Architect's Vault. I'm willing to share the end with you, and let me tell you, the end's the best."

The two gazed at each other.

"Alright, I'll take that. But you better show it to me," said Ivy with an appreciative smile.

Soon after that, Quinn led Ivy out of the vault and decided to leave for the night. It was late at night, and Ivy didn't have the Marauder's Map with her, so Quinn escorted her to the Gryffindor Tower.

"You said Cursed Vaults. Do you mean that there are more than one?"

"Yes, there are four more — five in total."

"Wait, don't tell me that all the late nights that you do are because of these vaults? What are the other vaults? Are they made by the

Founders?"

They finally reached the hallway just outside the Fat Lady's portrait.

"That's a tale for another time, Ivy," said Quinn laughing, "maybe some other day, I'll tell you about them — maybe after I complete all of them. .

. all five of them," his tone turning a tinge serious at the end.

"Deal!" said Ivy, half-dapping(slapping) Quinn's hand and then ran towards the Fat Lady's portrait without awaiting Quinn's reply.

". . . that wasn't a deal," said Quinn, having been left alone to stare at his hand.

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Quinn West - MC - Huh, sharing actually felt good.

Ivy Potter - Shot her shot - I got a deal; it's final, no takebacks.

FictionOnlyReader - Author - Thinking about the future.

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If you have any ideas regarding the magic you want to see in this fiction or want to offer some ideas regarding the progression. Move onto the DISCORD Server and blast those ideas.

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231. Chapter 231: DA Files: Force

Of Emotion

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All the chapters would still be posted here, but you can support me with a donation and get chapters earlier than usual as a bonus.

Link in the Bio/Profile

"Good evening, everyone. Please gather around so we can get started," said Quinn, addressing the DA crowd gathered in the Room of Requirements.

It had been a few months since DA had begun its sessions, and the learning activities were now in full swings — every attending member had assimilated the sessions and their "homework/self-study" into their regular routines leading to a peak learning environment — it helped that Quinn had created a competitive environment to motivate learning (through one-up-ing the others.)

"What're we going to learn today? Revealers? Wards, or maybe something that hinders the opponent — like the Anti-Disapparition Jinx." The usually disciplined Hermione Granger sounded like a child hopped on sugar left to play in an amusement park.

Quinn smiled, "I appreciate your enthusiasm, Hermione."

Hermione blushed a bit out of embarrassment.

"But today, we're going to examine something that would allow you to defend yourself. Defensive spells. That's what we're going to tackle today.

The art of protecting yourself — it may be when you are off-balance; when your opponent attacked first trying to the initiative, at times you can't dodge, or whenever in the myriads of possibilities that you might need to stop an incoming attack.

"Duels are short ordeals. When a spell hits, it gets tricky to recuperate using your own magic quickly enough, and that too in the heat of battle. So the objective of defensive spells is to protect yourself at all times and not come in contact with spells or any harmful object."

A decent bone-breaking spell could fracture a vital bone like the femur (in the thigh) or fibula and tibia (in the lower leg) enough to hinder mobility leading to a vulnerable position until they could be mended back — that duration of injury could be converted into defeat (or death) by an opportunistic opponent.

"We'll be starting with the standard Shield charm, Protego." He slashed

his fake wand, and an invisible barrier rippled in the air. "A versatile spell that can be used in a multitude of situations — everywhere from a spell to physical objects — this will be a first in the series of defensive spells."

Quinn lazily waved his fake wand, and the names of DA members appeared in the air, every name paired with another — after the Theodore Nott incident, Quinn had taken up to himself to form pairs that would facilitate learning at a higher pace.

"One will cast the Shield charm, and the other will cast a Disarming spell. Then both will switch sides. After you think that you're comfortable blocking a Disarming spell, change spells and switch it up to introduce some diversity of experience."

As everyone shuffled to their pair, a single nervous hand went up from the group.

"Uhm, sorry. . . I'm not paired with anyone."

Quinn nodded, "I know Neville. You will be practicing with me today."

Everyone halted their actions in surprise and turned their heads to look at the pair. Generally, Quinn would go around the room giving out pointers or sit in a corner doing his things, but not once had Quinn paired with anyone during a DA session.

Neville gripped his wand tightly in both hands near his chest: "M-Me?"

"Yes, Neville, you. Now come one, let's not waste time and get started," said Quinn. "Also, before every get's started! Please, gather around; I have one extra piece of advice I want to share," he said to the crowd.

The DA members formed a circle around Quinn and Neville, who faced each other, wands ready.

"I'm going to share a personal tip with all of you. It has served me well when I cast defensive magic," said Quinn. "Neville, would you give me

your best Reductor, please," he smiled.

Neville gulped. "Reductor. . . but you said that we aren't allowed to use lethal spells against each other," his voice trailed at the end.

"There's no reason to be nervous, Neville. In fact, good job bringing up the rule," said Quinn. "But, I need a Reductor for me to demonstrate the Protego. I assure you, it'll not hurt me. You can believe me, Neville."

Neville licked his lips. He wasn't sure about it. Neville wasn't feeling comfortable pointing his wand at a friend while arming it with a lethal spell.

He touched his forearm where the Gryffindor common room password was written in magical ink; for years, Quinn had been helping him with the passwords; every week, he would go to the AID office, and Quinn would update the ink.

But then he saw the confident smile on Quinn's face. There was no doubt that Quinn was better at magic than him. He clenched his jaw and nodded after a deep breath.

"I'll do it," he said.

Quinn beamed. He raised his wand, and a Protego shield rippled into existence. "Let out everything you got, Neville."

Neville slowly raised his wand and carefully aimed his wand at Quinn. He glanced behind Quinn, and it was of assurance that everyone had their wands out. If he messed up, they would be ready to defend themselves.

Please, don't mess up, Neville thought — "Reducto!" — A blue spell-light thrummed out his wand and zapped towards Quinn, who didn't even flinch in the face of a that could blow apart his body.

The blue zap banged against Quinn's Protego, and the entire barrier rippled into sight. Neville held his breath as a bead of sweat trickled

down his temple. Contrary to his worries, despite the wild rippling, the barrier remained intact and outlasted his Reducto, standing strong even after the blue spell-light fizzled out of existence.

"Now, that wasn't bad, was it?" said Quinn smiling.

Neville hurriedly nodded. He felt his racing heart calm down.

"That's what a good Protego spell can do," Quinn spoke to the crowd.

"Now, time for the tip I used to face Neville's Reductor," everyone perked up their ears, "I used the emotion of determination to power up my Protego."

Many confused expressions and head-tilts emerged in the crowd.

"Do you remember how I told you that emotion is an essential part of magic, and how any spell's quality can be benefited by applying an emotion or a mix of them — the question is to identify the emotion that would help, figure out an experience or memory to evoke that emotion, and finally properly channel it in your magic."

Quinn had preached the importance of emotion a lot, though most people here didn't comprehend the role of emotion in spells. He turned to the one person in the room who he knew understood and had applied sentiment to their magic.

"Harry, tell me what you think when casting a Patronus charm?" he asked.

Harry wasn't expecting to be called out all of a sudden. Admittedly, he had only been paying half attention to what Quinn was saying — his Protego was spell was excellent, he thought.

"Er, I think of happy memories."

". . . I was expecting more detail, but okay," said Quinn, "the secret behind Patronus charm is the feeling of happiness — the happier the memory, the better the charm would work — we will learn more about

this when we tackle the spell in later sessions. For the Shield charm and the majority of defensive spells, you need to think of memories that would evoke emotions like determination, perseverance, stubbornness, defiance!

"For example, if you have a memory of you were stubborn about accomplishing something and saw through your objective to the end. Maybe your parents, relatives, friends said that you wouldn't be able to do something, but you proved them wrong and stuck it to their faces," that one raised a lot of heads, "memories like these will help you cast a stronger shield that would stand firm against even the strongest of spells. "Think about such memories. Dive deep to find them, and your defensive spells would be able to withstand more beating, last longer, and even be easier to cast," Quinn finished passionately.

He dismissed everyone and was about to start up with Neville when he heard.

"What do you use?"

Quinn and many others turned to the speaker, seeing that it was Daphne who had raised the question.

"What do you mean?" asked Quinn.

"What do emotion or memory do you use?"

Quinn cleared his throat and sighed deeply before taking up the question.

"A couple of years back, I encountered a problem; I think it was the greatest problem of my life at that time and maybe to this day," losing his magic was the worst time of his life, and the summer break he spent regaining it was his greatest show of struggle from him, "I spent an entire summer break trying to solve that problem — be it either day or night, I was constantly working on it," he gazed at Daphne, "I imagined that while facing Neville's Reducto."

Everyone felt the seriousness in Quinn's voice. For many of them, it was the first time they had seen him like this. Different from his familiar jolly self. Those close to Quinn were curious about what he was talking about. "Though I don't use those emotions anymore," said Quinn nonchalantly as everyone was turning away.

Everyone halted. They once again turned towards Quinn.

"Then what do you use?" asked Daphne again. If he didn't use that memory, why did he answer the question with it, and why did he give them the advice if he himself did not use it.

"Ah, don't get me wrong," said Quinn, noticing everyone's expression, "there was a time I used emotions like determination and stubbornness; there's nothing wrong with them; I just don't use them anymore, that's it." ". . . you didn't answer the question."

"Don't worry about it," he didn't want to say.

"Out with it!" Eddie shouted from the crowd.

"I will tell, but don't try to copy me." Quinn looked at everyone and said,

"I use fear as my emotion of choice while casting defensive magic."

"Fear?" asked Daphne.

Quinn nodded. "Fear is a natural, powerful, and primitive human emotion. Fear alerts us to the presence of danger or the threat of harm. It's what teaches us what's dangerous and what's not. A baby who touches a candle flame and gets burned will never touch it again because they know it'll hurt and form a fear of that action.

"Why do we block or dodge spells? It's because we know that they will cause harm to us, so we avoid it. Spells like a Pinching hex might not inspire fear, but I have developed my mind to think what it would feel like if a hundred Pinching hex attacked me at the same. I'm able to think what it would feel like what a spell hitting me would feel like when it's

dialled up to eleven. I taste the fear and will do anything to avoid it — my magic while feeling fear would go above and beyond when I'm in danger."

It was a revelation while Quinn was using the summer break when he lost magic to charge his defensive magic. He had noticed that there was another emotion attached to those memories — it being fear — and Quinn was subconsciously drawing from the emotion of fear, and it was giving a substantial boost. Previously, determination was the primary, and fear was the subconscious secondary emotion. After the realization stuck, Quinn switched it up — fear became the primary emotion, and because it was a "dark" emotion, Quinn used determination as the secondary and the emotion that kept fear in check. The result of the experiment was a major boost to power for his defensive spells.

And that was precisely the reason why he didn't want to share this with everyone.

"Don't use fear!" said Quinn, warning. "Fear, while powerful, can cause an internal collapse at difficult situations when pressure is at peak. Magic and emotion are volatile and tricky to manipulate, so I repeat that none of you attempt to use fear as the force behind your magic. The emotions I mentioned before have their own specialties and are much more stable than fear. Moreover, after a certain level, channelling fear doesn't feel pleasant; the aftermath more often than not ends up pushing you feeling all worked up."

It had taken a while for even Quinn to not let the fear dominate him in the aftereffect.

Quinn warned a couple more times before starting with Neville. They followed the same defense-offense system as others, with Quinn shooting Disarming charms just strong enough to challenge Neville but not enough

to overwhelm.

"So, Neville, you have been doing good for the past few weeks," said Quinn after Neville blocked a shot, "you have had the best improvement than anyone else," Neville flushed red a little, on inside he was feeling like his delight would fly him out of the room, that is until Quinn said, "that is ever since Bellatrix Lestrange escaped Azkaban."

Neville froze up. The fresh shield he had brought up collapsed of the shock and daze.

Neville looked around to see if anyone had heard. "W-What?"

"You don't have to worry about anyone listening in. I have cast a silencing ward around us for this conversation," spoke Quinn. "I noticed the name Longbottom while reading upon Bellatrix Lestrange, and after a search in the archives, I found that Frank and Alice Longbottom were your parents."

"I don't want to talk about it," said Neville in a surprisingly determined voice and cast Shield charm, which was immediately met by a Disarming spell from Quinn.

"I don't want to talk about your parents, Neville," said Quinn, "the reason I bring this up is that it's related to your sudden boost in magical improvement."

Neville stared at Quinn skeptically. He searched for something on Quinn's face.

"When we started DA, I noticed that your wand wasn't compatible with you," said Quinn, "the compatibility factor was terrible, and when I asked around, I found out that you always had trouble with magic," Neville looked uncomfortable, "it's not your wand, is it, Neville?"

Quinn already knew the backstory, but he needed to weave it up to proceed with the conversation.

Neville stared down at the wand in his hands. "It's my father's."

"Hmm, I figured. That wand's the reason why you struggled with magic, Neville."

"W-What do you mean?" said Neville; it was the first time he was hearing this.

"The wand chooses the wizard, Neville. You can't just pick up any wand and make it work. A magical and his magical focus needs to be sync for the magical to be able to bring out its magic to the fullest."

The truth of the matter was that in a person's life, they went to get themselves a wand at the age of eleven. Quinn wasn't sure about others, but if one went to Ollivanders, they would be told about the "the wand chooses the wizard," saying. . . but that was it. Once in their lives, people heard that saying, maybe twice if they went in for another wand in their lives.

No usual person would be expected to remember a single event in their lives that happened when they were at the tender age of eleven. By the time people grew up, they would forget about the saying from the strange wand shop owner. Moreover, it was a severe violation of common place manners to ask for people's wands.

So while everyone brought their children new wands because it was expected to do, not everyone knew why new ones were brought except for wanting their children to have new ones.

That's why it wasn't strange that Augusta Longbottom, Neville's grandmother, the old lady, would remember the reason behind buying wands; combining that with the sentiment, had Frank Longbottom's wand end up in Neville's hands.

"Your father's wand wasn't compatible with you, and for four and half years, your magic didn't channel properly. That's the reason why you

have been struggling with magic ever since coming to Hogwarts."

Neville remained rooted to his spot. He had thought he was terrible at magic for his entire life because something was wrong with him. Not only him, but everybody else felt the same. His grand-uncle had to drop him off from the top of the stairs just to bring out his magic. But here he was hearing Quinn West saying that it wasn't his fault, but his wand's.

"B-But, y-you just said that I was doing good."

"Wands are complex magical artifacts. Just as wands can fall out of sync with their users, they can also form bonds with those they previously rejected," said Quinn. He pointed at Frank/Neville's wand, "that wand, from what I can tell is made from Ashwood, and Ash wands are known to cleave to their one true master and ought not to be passed on or to be gifted from the original owner, because they will lose power and skill. The wand rejected you previously is now accepting you and is finally conducting your magic perfectly."

"Why now?"

"Tell me, how did you feel about the breakout, or to be exact, how did you feel about Bellatrix Lestrange's escape?"

The mention of the name made Neville's blood boil. That vile woman had turned his mother and father into what they were today. He had spent his entire life seeing complete family; people his age spending time with his family, and all he had were parents driven to madness. It always made him wonder what it would be like.

"I hate that vermin," said Neville acidly. He wanted nothing more but to take revenge against Bellatrix Lestrange for ruining his life.

"You have gained a goal, Neville, and with it come has a resolution. The wands liked it and had offered you its support."

Neville clenched at the Ash wand with the unicorn core. The wand was

the constant reminder of what a failure he was. It reminded him of his grandmother's disappointment and how he had let his parents down. It felt him conflicted — the wand was the reason for his struggles, but now it supported him because he wanted to kill her parent's assailant.

"Let's continue," said Neville. He didn't want to continue this topic.

Quinn obliged and shot a Disarming spell on Neville's Shield charm. The shield was substantially stronger than before — focus and deep determination were being amply channeled through the spell.

'Take advantage of it, Neville,' thought Quinn, 'the wand will be the best conductor for you, and when the day comes that Bellatrix Lestrange dies and your goal accomplished, that wand will fall out of sync with you.'

The correct thing to do would be to urge Neville to buy himself a new wand. But right now, the wand in Neville's hands was a constant reminder that it wasn't his fault. It reminded him of the wrongful humiliation he suffered. Those emotions would keep Neville in focus and keep him motivated to keep improving to prove everything wrong.

Determination, perseverance, and defiance were powerful emotions after all.

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Quinn West - MC - Good. . . good. . . let the hate flow through you.

Neville Longbottom - To everyone - "I find your lack of faith disturbing."

Neville Longbottom's wand - Ashwood and unicorn - What is thy bidding, my master.

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If you have any ideas regarding the magic you want to see in this fiction or want to offer some ideas regarding the progression. Move onto the DISCORD Server and blast those ideas.

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232. Chapter 232: Date Time,

Surprise Visit

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The Architect's vault second room, Cuboidal Creation, had exceeded Quinn's expectations of the amount he thought it would take to go through all the material cubes. Before he knew it was already, February had walked to the end of its second week, bringing with it wetter and warmer weather. Quinn's gut told him that he was already behind schedule despite not knowing the vault's contents.

Quinn gazed at his Friday pocket watch; it was already half past six in the evening. He had just completed all his work and delivered on his scheduled commitments so that he could free up the weekend and spend time in the Architect's vault for two days and grind the last leg of the second room and proceed to the next stage of the vault.

He snapped the cover close on the watch. "Another half-hour, then I close up."

With nothing to do, Quinn decided to do some work on AID's accounting.

Making a profit was never Quinn's motive when he had set up, but in the few years of operations, AID had been able to very narrow margin

(almost negligible) of profit from serving the needful students of

Hogwarts with their problems. Quinn would've seen more gains if not for

his 'favor exchange policy, but that policy had given returns other than

monetary ones. The other reason behind AID just only breakeven most

months was the operating expenses required to run AID. In particular, the

coin that was needed to keep the AID workshop fully equipped with herbs, other potion ingredients, rune supplies, among the various other things that Quinn and Luna (mostly the former) went through regularly. It was because of Quinn's meticulous accounting skills and financial sense that he hadn't needed to borrow from his personal funds. Occasions such as paying Ludo Bagman's debt to goblins were a few exceptions when Quinn had used his own funds.

'At this rate, February's going to end up in red,' noted Quinn. But he wasn't worried; AID would make for all its losses from March onwards with the AID-notes series — they were bestsellers since the first release years.

Time ticked away, and after another time check, only ten minutes remained to seven, so Quinn got up to pack things up for the day, but just as he was about to enter the workshop to do the end of the day Scouring spell, the detection ward outside his door triggered a bell in his mind.

Three people. Quinn stared at the front door with his hand at the handle of the red workshop door. He waited, waited, and waited — for two minutes, the people outside didn't enter the office.

Quinn shrugged. If they didn't want to come in, then he wasn't going to wait. However, the second he pushed the workshop door open, the door chime rang like a mosquito buzzing near the ear. Quinn heaved a sigh and turned to be surprised by the sight of Daphne standing at the threshold; behind her, Tracey pumped her brows with a grin in greeting when their eyes met, with Astoria standing on her tip-toes, trying to peek over Daphne's shoulder.

"Hey, you three—"

Daphne closed the door leaving Tracey and Astoria outside. The brief

gaze Daphne shared with them before closing the door told that the other two had no intention to accompany Daphne inside.

"Why did they stay outside? Aren't they coming in?"

Daphne took a deep breath, then turned away from the towards Quinn.

"I've something talk about. . . alone."

"What is it?" said Quinn, swiftly moving back to his barstool. It must be something serious, he thought.

Daphne gracefully sat herself down on the chair opposite Quinn. She straightened the pleats on her skirt. The Slytherin hadn't matched eyes with Quinn once since entering the room.

She mustered the courage and spoke up. "The outing to Hogsmeade is on Sunday."

Quinn nodded. The second Hogsmeade weekend was scheduled to fall on this Sunday. He wasn't going this time — this weekend, he was to spend his time alone with a room full of burdensome stones.

"I was wondering if you would visit the village with me."

"Is there something wrong, Daphne?" said Quinn; it was so unlike her to be fidgeting with her hands while speaking. "Is there something bothering you? Please don't be hesitant and share what seems to be the trouble. Is there a problem? Is that why you're asking me to accompany you to the village?"

Daphne finally looked up towards Quinn. He was usually sharp as a tack, so why couldn't he understand something so simple. Would she need to be blunt as Tracey had asked her to be?

"Daphne?"

"I am asking if you would go on a date with me this Sunday on Fourteenth of February," she said as direct as her heart would allow — mother magic, she did it!

Quinn froze up in his chair. His mind seemed to kick up like a sputtering motor. Hogsmeade weekend. Outing. Fourteenth of February. . . a date on Valentine's Day.

"O-Oh." The moment that slipped out of his mouth, Quinn's mental status took a tight mental slap from itself.

Daphne didn't take that surprised slip as discouragement and recognized for it was. She decided to push forward. "Would you?" she asked.

But Quinn wasn't one to be pushed into an answer. He relaxed his tensed hands on the table and joined his hands, intercrossing his fingers. Daphne also seemed to be riding the wave of her mustered courage and hadn't removed her eye from Quinn.

Both stared at each other for a few seconds to realize that it was a bit bashful to stare into each other's eyes after the exchange they just had and turned away from the other's gaze at the same time.

The ticking of the wall clock behind Quinn filled the room, stewing in a spell of awkward silence. Daphne's question had pushed the ball was in Quinn's hand; he was to break this silence.

He looked at her, and a flurry of thoughts flashed through his head. It was as if someone had opened every memory book in his mind with even the slightest mention of the girl sitting opposite him.

He had known her for several years. From the very first day on the Hogwarts Express, she had been so quiet and cold that day. He recalled the day he had seen her smile for the first time, recalled the occasional giggle he had stolen from her. Her worried expression shining in the moonlight when she grilled him about Astoria's cure. The many conversations he had with her. The times he had danced with her. The many hours he had spent with her discussing and teaching her magic. His thoughts went back to the last year and how she had looked in the black

dressing-gown on the Yuletide ball; she catching his eye as she danced with the Bulgarian meathead, and one different decision would have him escorting her.

It seemed that his weekend plans needed to be changed.

"I'll be delighted," his soft voice made her blue eyes look at him, "to visit the village with you this Sunday," he smiled softly, "it's a date."

Daphne stared with wide eyes and raised eyebrows. She had come here hoping the worst — that Quinn would reject her and maybe ruin her friendship with him, but after last year, Daphne had to try — she couldn't give up because of her fear without giving it a chance.

Now Daphne was glad that she asked. She had wanted something, and she got it.

She nodded as if Quinn's answer was expected. "I'll meet you in the Entrance hall on Sunday."

"I'll be waiting for it patiently," Quinn smiled.

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Outside, Tracey and Astoria waited for Daphne to come out, hopefully with good news. Both were feeling a worry for Daphne — Tracey tapped her foot against the floor as she kept her eye trained on the office door, while Astoria couldn't stay still and was pacing the corridor.

"What if he refuses?" said Astoria, coming to a screeching halt in front of Tracey. "What if he already has a date? We didn't know until very late that he was going with Delacour last year. What if he's going with someone else, and we don't know about it; what would happen then?"

"I asked Eddie," said Tracey, "he said that Quinn hadn't said anything."

"Didn't he also not know last year? It could be the same this year."

Tracey had no answers to that. Even though she had asked Eddie if Quinn had plans, she had stressed that he was not to poke or chance an answer

out of Quinn — Eddie Carmichael wasn't the subtlest of people.

"Let's just trust Daphne. She'll come out with good news, I know it."

Astoria bit her thumbnail and resumed her nervous pacing. All this talking had just amped her worries more — she didn't want her sister to be heartbroken — neither did she want to pin the blame on Quinn if it did happen.

The door jingled open, and out came Daphne, looking the same she did every day. Tracey and Astoria all but rushed towards her but pressed the breaks when they saw Quinn step out as well.

"Right, well, that's settled then," Quinn said, and Daphne nodded. He turned to Tracey and Astoria and waved once before gently closing the door, leaving the three girls behind.

Tracey and Astoria stared at Daphne, who began walking wordlessly, not giving them an answer.

"Dear sister, why are you just walking away? Please use that mouth of yours to speak something; it's not for decoration!"

"Daph? Daphne? Greengrass! You answer me, what happened in there? Did you chicken and not tell him; don't you dare tell me that is what happened."

Daphne stopped and twirled on the balls of her feet, her hair, robes, and skirt lifting just a bit. Tracey and Astoria halted — Daphne Greengrass never twirled.

The two girls got their answer in the form of the brightest smile capable of melting from the Ice Queen.

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Eddie was gazing at his bed with furrowed brows when he heard climbing steps. He could tell from the sound that it was Quinn.

"Quinn, help your mate out, will ya?" he said without looking back.

As he expected, it was indeed Quinn: "With what?"

Eddie lifted the two jumpers from his bed and turned towards Quinn, who was placing his book bag at his study table. "Which one should I wear on Sunday? I have a Valentine's day date with Tracey, we are going to the village. This one, on the right, or the one on the left. I like them both, they are my favorites, but I can't seem to decide between one — what do you think?"

Quinn looked at the two options: The one on the right was black with a white-collar. The left one was also black — instead of a white collar, it had a white stripe on the side pockets. He looked at Eddie; he had changed into his casuals after Quidditch practice; lo and behold, he was covered in all black from head to toe.

"The white and yellow one you got on your birthday, the one that your mum sent."

Eddie's shoulders slumped. He looked at the jumpers in his hands — what was wrong with them? He looked excellent in both of them.

"What are you and Marcus going to do on Sunday?" said Eddie as he stuffed the jumpers into his cupboard. "I won't be with you guys," he added smugly.

"I have a date. I don't know what Marcus will be doing."

"Is that so—"

The white-and-yellow jumper slipped out of Eddie's hands. He turned towards Quinn — 'No fucking way,' he muttered his breath.

"Say that again," said Eddie, "what do you have on Sunday?"

"I have a date," Quinn leaned back against the study table. Relaxed. His hands rested on the tabletop at his sides.

Eddie closed the distance between them briskly and gripped Quinn's arm.

"With who?" his gaze incredulous.

"Daphne"

"Greengrass?"

"I don't think there's another one."

"You asked?"

"No, she did."

"You accepted?"

"Yes, thus the date."

"On Valentine's day."

"Yes."

Another series of steps climbing sounded as Marcus entered the room with a small huff. He shuffled to his study table and hung his book bag on a hook attached to the table's side.

"This week was a bit hectic, don't you think?" said Marcus. "Too many submissions; we even got a new set of assignments. I really want a relaxed weekend. What's wrong with you?" He asked looking at Eddie, looking strangely serene.

"On Sunday, many will cry, and then they will mourn," said Eddie, prophesizing.

"Don't exaggerate," said Quinn.

"I'm confused. What are we talking about?" asked Marcus. He sat down on his bed.

"He's got a date."

"What?!" Marcus all but flew off his bed. "Who? When? Why?" he asked.

"Daphne. Valentine's day. She asked he accepted."

Marcus gripped the hair on the top of his head and smacked his lips. "A calm weekend, yeah right, that's not going to happen."

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Seeing that a chunk of Quinn's time was to be subverted to spend time on a date, Quinn entered the Architect's vault early in the morning, before breakfast was served. He packed three meals and other supplies for the entire day so that he wouldn't need to emerge until he was satisfied with his work done, and if he was required, Luna was there as the point of contact. He had even made sure that those with detention with Umbridge had their doses of potions packed in unbreakable vials and just to be needlessly sure he had changed the tapes in her office.

It just turned out that when Quinn was in the flow of things, cut from the outside world, some guests decided to visit Hogwarts on an impromptu visit.

Dumbledore sat in his office, working on various school-related tasks that needed to be taken care of. He sighed as he picked up another report; there were so many of them. He had been too busy with outside matters — work had piled up in his absence.

He lightly raised his hand, and a lemon drop from a nearby glass ornated dish rose up and flew between his index finger and thumb. Dumbledore popped the lemon drop into his mouth as his aged eyes read from behind his half-moon glasses.

"As expected, nothing beats a lemon drop," smiled Dumbledore from behind his long beard.

"Someone's at your door."

Dumbledore glanced at the portrait of a past headmistress before gazing at the entrance to his office. They wouldn't speak if it was someone from within the school, so it was someone from outside.

To enter the headmaster's office, one had to speak the password to the stone gargoyle that would remove its wings from the way. After that, a

wall behind the gargoyle would split open to reveal a stone staircase that led to a door with a griffin knocker that would finally open to his office. He could hear the gritting stone noise of the wall splitting and the faint steps from the staircase. Dumbledore expected a knock on his door (which was there for his privacy), but contrary to his expectations, the door flew open.

The guests were people he wasn't expecting today.

"Professor Umbridge," Dumbledore looked at her companion, "Cornelius, to what do I owe this pleasure?"

Cornelius Fudge, the Minister of Magic, dressed in his parent green suit with a bowler hat on top, entered the Hogwart's headmaster's office with his eyes narrowed, squinting, and frowning as he gazed around the office furtively.

The last one to enter the office were two Aurors — both part of the Minister's detail. They stationed themselves on either side of the door like guards.

"Dumbledore," said Fudge, his lips pressing into a white slash. "How have you been?"

Dumbledore sat behind his desk, his expression serene, the tips of his long fingers together. "I have been well, Cornelius." He watched Fudge pace his office. "What seems to be the matter, Cornelius. You seem to be stressed."

"You know exactly why!" said Fudge pointedly.

"I am not sure, I understand."

Fudge slammed his hands on Dumbledore's desk. "I'm talking about the mass breakout in Azkaban! You're using it to spread lies about the Dark Lord's return! I want you to stop it immediately!"

"I assure you, Cornelius, but I haven't said a word of lie."

"Stop pretending, Dumbledore!" said Fudge, his pasty white skin turning red. "I know you're behind all the articles! I want them to stop, so make them stop!"

Ever since the Azkaban breakout, the public's view had changed. It would've been fine if the Ministry would've provided a legitimate theory behind the escape, but their official statement was full of holes, and the public could see those holes as clear as the sun in the clear noon sky. So, they turned to the next reasonable explanation, which was Dumbledore and Harry's version of the story.

The Ministry had suffered a massive dip in approval ratings, and in direct-correlation, it showed in Wizengamot. The support he had from independent seats, parts of Grey faction, estranged parts of Light faction, all who had been supporting him, suddenly went crawling back to their holes. All he had left was his own personal supporters and the Dark faction, but that wasn't enough.

"My apologies if you are facing difficulties, Cornelius, but I haven't been partaking in any of these activities that you're talking about," said Dumbledore, inclining his head.

The portraits of old headmasters and mistresses were not shamming sleep today. All of them were watching what was happening below, severe and alert. But Dumbledore's behaviour made many light-hearted ones chuckle.

"Dumbledore, I'm warning you to make your Light faction step down," said Fudge, "or you are going to regret it," Fudge leaned over Dumbledore's desk, "you have already lost so many positions, who knows, you might just lose the position of Headmaster. I do have an able replacement lined up and a draft for a fresh Educational Decree." Umbridge giggled behind her hand. Standing tall behind Fudge. She

knew who Fudge was talking about. Even the Aurors at the door chuckled.

"So, what's it going to be Dumbledore," said Fudge. He was sure that this threat would work; after all, he would've taken it if it was him.

But who was going to tell Fudge that not everyone thought like him.

Dumbledore sighed. He finally had some free time after a busy past few months. He wanted to stay in Hogwarts and spend some time among the children. But, now he had to face this. There was a limit to every man, and he was very close to his.

Suddenly, the temperature in the room started to rise. The cold February office began to heat up like a tropical summer. Fudge, Umbridge looked around the office, confused about what was happening.

"Cornelius, why are we doing this," said Dumbledore getting up. "When did you get this childish?"

The room's temperature kicked up another notch. The office suddenly became smoldering hot.

"D-Dumbledore, what're you doing?" Fudge spluttered. "Aurors! Arrest this man!"

When no answer came from the Aurors, Fudge turned back. "What are you —"

There was no one behind him. Not the Aurors and not Umbridge. Instead, he saw three pairs of socks, two black, one pink, lying on the ground. He turned back to the front, and his heart almost leaped out of his throat when he saw Dumbledore standing close to him, peering down at him. At that moment, Fudge finally realized who he was facing. This wasn't the eccentric, mild-mannered Headmaster. No, he was facing the man who defeated Gellert Grindlewald. The man only man who the Dark Lord feared.

"D-Dumbledore."

"Cornelius, even I have a limit to my patience. You coming here isn't doing it any good."

"I-I'm the Mi-Minister—"

"Do you have anything else remaining you wanted to tell me other than that you want me to stop the articles?"

"N-No."

Dumbledore waved his hand, and three pairs of socks came flying into his hands.

"Then, I think it's time for you to leave," said Dumbledore as he slipped socks into Fudge's front coat pocket. "You know your way out, Cornelius. I won't be seeing you out."

That day, the Minister of Magic could be seen running through the halls of Hogwarts with sweat dripping all over his body.

That day, Umbridge and the two Aurors woke up to find themselves lying on the ground just outside Hogwarts' boundary, with no idea how they got there. One second they were in Dumbledore's office, but the next, they were outside Hogwarts with the Fudge heaving while crouching on the ground.

Not a peep about the incident was heard from Fudge or from his faction.

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Quinn West - MC - It seems I have a date.

Albus Dumbledore - Headmaster - Take your socks, and get out.

Cornelius Fudge - Minister of Magic - Came in and then went out.

FictionOnlyReader - Author - I'm a monster

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If you have any ideas regarding the magic you want to see in this fiction or want to offer some ideas regarding the progression. Move onto the

DISCORD Server and blast those ideas.

The link is in the synopsis!

233. Chapter 233: The Date: First

Half

If you want to read ahead of the posting schedule then head over to my Patreón.

All the chapters would still be posted here, but you can support me with a donation and get chapters earlier than usual as a bonus.

Link in the Bio/Profile

On the morning of the Sunday, a big herd of Hogwarts dressed particularly carefully. They arrived at the great hall that smelled of delicious house-elf-cooked food like it did every morning, but today, there was something different in the air.

"Loove's in the air," said Marcus sitting opposite to his two best friends, a grin splitting his face.

Quinn looked up from his newspaper. "Is that teasing that I detect? That's rare for you."

"Look at you both, dressed so sharply," Marcus glanced at Quinn. "Even you're dressed sharply for your standards."

Eddie was dressed in his white-and-yellow jumped and black pants.

While Quinn put on a green sweater over a white shirt and tie above grey checkered pants.

"That's obvious. I have a date to hit out of the park. I need to dress the part," said Eddie, his chin high and arms crossed.

"It's a gentleman's duty to be dressed appropriately when he's escorting a lady," Quinn repeated the wise words from a certain butler back home.

"What are you going to do today? Any plans for your lonesome today?"

Marcus took out an envelope from his robes. "I'm going to a party."

"A party? Today? I don't recall there being a party today," said Eddie.

"That's because you're not invited," Marcus lightly waved the invitation in his hand.

"What's the party about?" asked Quinn. Even he didn't know about this party, and he usually got an invite to everything.

"It's a tea party, but instead of tea, they're going to serve hot chocolate." Eddie and Quinn looked at each other and communicated with a couple of discreet wiggles and eye movements.

"The host. . . it's Luna, isn't it?" said Eddie.

Marcus nodded.

"Who else is coming?"

"Me, Luna, Astoria," said Marcus, and Quinn nodded, foreseeing the answer, "and Madam Pomfrey."

Eddie did a spit take, and a forkful of broccoli slipped down on Quinn's plate as he stared incredulously.

"I thought it'd be safe if we had a faculty member nearby in case Umbridge decided to vulture around," said Marcus, "so after some discussion, we decided to hold it in the back part of the hospital wing with Madam Pomfrey," he looked Quinn, "I exploited your relation with her to be allowed to set up the hot chocolate party in THE hospital wing, so thank you for that."

"You didn't ask me for permission."

Marcus waved Quinn's query off. "Don't sweat the small stuff."

Ever since DA had begun its operation, Marcus had taken it upon himself to maintain the group's secrecy. In every DA representative meet, Marcus stressed that the members needed to be very strict regarding the mention of DA outside the Room of Requirements. It was no secret that he didn't like Umbridge and what she represented, so he did everything he could

to make sure DA remained a secret only known to the members and no one else. His efforts had been paying dividends as DA had remained a secret; there wasn't even a whisper of a rumor about a secret group operating in Hogwarts.

"Eddie."

The voice brought a smile to Eddie's face. He got up and hopped onto his feet under the gaze of his two grinning friends.

"Ready to have fun," he asked.

Tracey Davis nodded. "I am. I hope you have a fun day planned."

"I have the first part of the day planned out," said Eddie, "I hope you have your own half planned out. I have great expectations."

For their date today, Tracey and Eddie had divided the day into two halves. The first half was taken by Eddie, while Tracey took the latter half.

"Mine is going to be better than yours," said Tracey.

Eddie chuckled, "If you believe that, then you don't know me. I'm really competitive," he jutted his chin towards Quinn and Marcus, "ask them, they will tell you."

Quinn and Marcus nodded.

"Then I must tell you that I am called the Slytherin's queen of fun," said Tracey.

Eddie opened his mouth but was hit by a grape. He looked at Quinn, "What?" he asked.

"Quit while things are going good," said Quinn, "no need to put an ax to your foot."

"Quinn, you should also get going. Daphne's waiting for you," said Tracey.

"Oh my, she's already there," Quinn put down his utensils. A bluish-green

glow scoured his hands clean, "well then, can't make her wait, can we."

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Daphne Greengrass stood a little to the side of the oak front doors, looking pretty with her long flowing hair, attracting a lot of eyes from the people gathered in the entrance hall, waiting to be allowed to exit the castle to go Hogsmeade. Daphne was one of the most beautiful girls in the school; even with the reputation that had gained her the moniker of Ice Queen, she was one of the most sought after girls in Hogwarts — having to face many confessions and offers to go out on dates — the rejections, cold as ice as the rejectees had known to describe, were a part of why she had gained the moniker. It fit. Daphne, the plant, her namesake, were entirely poisonous, especially the colorful berries they produced.

Many Hogwarts students preferred to stay in their school uniforms throughout the day despite the rules allowing casual clothing after classes. So today, Daphne Greengrass dressed in casual clothing further enhanced the blonde's attractiveness.

Daphne was minding her business, internally all agog about today, when a large gang of Slytherin girls passed them, including Pansy Parkinson. "Greengrass," screeched Pansy to a chorus of snide giggles. "Alone today, I see. Where is Davis? Usually, she buzzes around you like a fly. Oh, I remember; isn't she going out today with that blockhead Carmichael. I thought she would develop a sense of refined taste in your company, but it seems I was wrong," she snickered at the end.

"You wouldn't know refined if it was staring you in your face, Parkinson," said Daphne in a calm, leveled voice. "Why don't you and your cackle

stand a distance away from me. I don't want to catch anything."

Pansy turned up her nose in scorn. She was always like this, treating others as if they were people were beneath her. She snorted and turned away, searching if Draco had arrived.

"Sorry to keep you waiting."

"I haven't been waiting for long."

"You look absolutely stunning today."

"Thank you. I like your sweater; green suits you."

"Ah, before I forget. I got a gift for you. Just a little something I thought you'd like."

"You didn't have to. . ."

The conversation behind tugged on Pansy's ears. For one, she was curious who it was, curious about the pair, who were clearly about to go out on a date on Valentine's day. But the second, more pressing reason that pushed her brows to her hairline was that her ears identified the second voice as that of Daphne.

Pansy turned, and the sight made her fly open wide as her breath caught. The voice she recognized was indeed Daphne, but it was the other person that lit the burning sensation in the chest or stomach.

Why was it always her? Why did everyone choose her, even though she was always so obnoxious and arrogant. Was it because of her looks? Did the vixen's charm ensnare even the one who almost every girl in Hogwarts sought after?

"I was recently working with crystalline solids when I came across a mix that reminded me of your eyes," said Quinn West, with a smile capable of making hearts flutter. In his hands was a blue lotus made entirely from an electric blue crystal radiating a glimmering shimmer.

"It's gorgeous," said Daphne, her eyes entranced by the things of beauty in

her hands.

"I'm glad you liked it. How about you try giving it a tap from your wand."

Daphne glanced up, her electric blues searching for an explanation while her hand went to her wand.

"Take the flower in your left hand and give it a tap."

Daphne did so, and the moment her wand tip touched the crystal flower, it broke into dozens of tiny cherry-blossom-shaped petals, all tricking down Daphne's fingers, through her palm and the back of her hand, arriving at her wrist, where they united back to form a crystal wrist ring band, gracing her wrist with a mesmerizing electrifying blue.

"Do you like it?"

Daphne wordlessly nodded. In that moment, Daphne thought this was the most exquisite piece of jewellery she had seen — even more enchanting than the pieces in her mother's collection that Daphne had wanted for herself.

"That's great!" said Quinn, sighing a relieved breath. "I was worried it might be too flashy for your tastes."

"Tch, show-off little shit making others life difficult." Quinn turned to see that it was Eddie who had muttered the words under his breath.

Quinn beamed, "Thank you for your generous compliments."

Eddie's face contorted as if he had sucked on a lime. "Oh, you smug bugger jac—"

"I am back," the sudden arrival of Tracy halted Eddie's mouth as he greeted her with a smile.

"It's nothing. I was just asking Quinn if he could make me one of those," said Eddie pointing at Daphne's wrist, "I thought it would look good on you."

Tracey's eyes turned to eggs as she beelined to Daphne and joined her in

admiring the ring band.

"Daphne, it looks fabulous on you," she said. "Quinn gave it to you?"

"Yes."

"I am envious."

"So am I," muttered Eddie, shooting glare beams at Quinn, who wiggled his brows — I'm pure awesome, they seem to say.

"Okay, ladies, it's time for us to leave," said Quinn, "I just saw Filch limp, so we should probably line up, stay ahead of the crowd."

It was not only Pansy Parkinson who had witnessed the scene. Many eyes had chanced upon the fascinating crystal lotus, its receiver, and the one who had gifted it.

All it took was one domino tile to be tipped over for the complex domino sequence known as the Hogwarts rumor mill to grapevine a piece of gossip. It started from the queue of people being signed out by Filch talking about it, spreading to friends who had come to embarrass the new couples going on their dates, expanding to everyone in the great hall one door away, and it was only time when everyone would know about the blue lotus made from crystal —

That was if it was called the Hogwarts fact mill; alas, the Hogwarts rumor mill was a different creature. Just in a few exchanges along the great grapevine, the blue crystal lotus had turned into a blue sapphire lotus, and another few links after, the news was that Quinn West had gifted Daphne a rare blue diamond lotus.

Unbeknownst to them, Hogwarts had crafted a love saga with Daphne and Quinn as the central characters. They were busy getting started with their date.

Quinn smiled as he stepped out of the castle, and the fresh air reached him, finding it somehow easier to walk even with all the students

crowding the path. It was a fresh, breezy sort of day, perfect to go down to the village and have fun.

"So, Daphne," he said, "what do you want to do first? I was thinking that we should start with some Hogsmeade shopping. Buy things we need.

What do you think?"

"That would be fine with me."

"Excellent, then where should we go first?"

"We can shrink most things, so the order won't matter. Do you have one of those pockets of yours? Yes, good, then we won't need to have anything delivered. I think we should start with Ceridwen's Cauldrons. . ."

The subject of how to start the day carried them all the way down the drive and out through the gates. Quinn was again reminded how easy it was to talk to Daphne, no more difficult, in fact, than talking to Eddie and Marcus. He didn't need to check his words or lead her in conversations; it was delightful.

They wandered toward Dervish and Banges. A large poster had been stuck up in the window, and a few Hogsmeaders were looking at it. They moved aside when Quinn and Daphne approached, and Harry found himself staring once more at the ten colored pictures of the escaped Death Eaters. The poster ("By Order of the Ministry of Magic") offered a thousand-Galleon reward to any witch or wizard with information relating to the recapture of any of the convicts pictured.

"It's funny, isn't it," said Daphne in a low voice, also gazing up at the pictures of the Death Eaters. "Remember when that Peter Pettigrew escaped, and there were dementors all over Hogsmeade looking for him? And now ten Death Eaters are on the loose, and there aren't dementors anywhere . . ."

"Yes, it's indeed strange," said Quinn. "It seems they are indeed out of the

Ministry's control," he said in a whisper.

Only a very select few in the Ministry and the DMLE were aware that the dementors were no longer under the control of the Ministry. Others outside the Ministry knew the truth of the situation, but none wanted this news to get out — no one in the right mind wanted to leak the news and incite mass panic. The official party line for everybody was that the Aurors Office had deployed to their full capability to catch the escapees. The ten escaped Death Eaters and the other escapee were staring out of every shop window Quinn and Daphne passed. It started to rain, but fortunately, they had arrived at Scrivenshaft Quill Shop.

"Let's go inside," said Quinn, pulling Daphne inside the shop.

Daphne briefly glanced up the shop sign, recalling the Ministry Christmas Ball when she was the first year — Quinn had introduced his family as the owner of Scrivenshaft Quill Shop, which had confused her for a long time, and only later did she find out the truth later from her mother and then some from her father.

Quinn walked into the lively stationary supply shop slash printing solution shop. The shop had changed much through the year, the most change coming after last year with Quinn's Lunar developer putting color into literally everything. Before Lunar developer, Scrivenshaft wasn't as colorful as it is now. Right now, every corner of the shop was flushed with color.

"There's no one at the front desk," said Daphne.

Quinn turned his eyes away from the shop and pointed at the bell. "Ring it, Ben will come out."

Daphne pressed the button, and the ring chimed clear and loud around the shop. Quinn and Daphne glanced up at the ceiling, hearing hurried steps rush on the second floor, travel down the stairs, and the back

busted open, and a baby-faced young man slid into the room.

"W-Welcome to Scrivenshaft. How. . . What can I do for you today?" said the man before in one breath, and only after did he lookup. "Mr. W-West, you are here! D-Did you say that you would be visiting," the man seemed to have a nervous breakdown.

Quinn smiled. "Good morning, Ben. Please, calm down, take a deep breath, and relax."

Ben Sapworthy, the current manager of Scrivenshaft, the successor to Gary, who had moved up to the position of Head of Silver Moon Printing MagiTech. (Chapter 152)

"Y. . . Yes."

After Ben calmed down, he welcomed them again and asked how he could help them.

"We are here to get some school supplies," said Quinn, then turning to his companion. "This is my friend Daphne Greengrass and Daphne, this is Ben Sapworthy; he's the one who prints the AID notes and cards. He also designed a good amount last year for the Quidditch Tournament."

Daphne Greengrass gracefully curtsied that Ben returned clumsily.

"Daphne, if you have any stationery and printing needs, you can write to Ben, and he will help you out,' Quinn turned to Ben. "If she writes to you, please make a priority and apply the 'me' discount."

"Yes, of course. Daphne Greengrass. Understood."

After the short rain ended, they exited the shop, leaving behind Ben to relax.

"He was. . . fidgety," said Daphne.

Quinn nodded, "He will need to work on that aspect."

"It might not be my place to ask, but may I ask why?"

"Why is he in charge? Ben Sapworthy might be a nervous wreck, but the

reason he's in charge is because of his art and design skills. He can draw and design like it's no one else's business. His skill as an artist speaks for itself. The reason he's there is so that he can do his work in peace away from the rush and bustle of the Alley-named market."

They walked across Hogsmeade, and while walking, shopping, and talking, they somehow made their way to a side road in front of a small tea shop. It was a cramped, steamy little place where everything seemed to have been decorated with frills or bows.

"Do you want to go in?" he asked.

The sign above the shop said —

□Madam Puddifoot's Tea Shop□

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Quinn West - MC - Added crystal jewellery making into his resume.

Daphne Greengrass - Ice Queen - Has broken many weights.

Ben Sapworthy - Scrivenshaft - Magical Artist.

FictionOnlyReader - Author - The trailer to The Secrets of Dumbledore is going to come out on Monday. Hyped! Going to miss Depp. But excited for Mikkelsen

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If you have any ideas regarding the magic you want to see in this fiction or want to offer some ideas regarding the progression. Move onto the DISCORD Server and blast those ideas.

The link is in the bio!

234. Chapter 234: The Date:

Second Half

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a donation and get chapters earlier than usual as a bonus.

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☐Madam Puddifoot's Tea Shop☐

Daphne observed the little tea shop glancing at the number of golden cherubs that hovered over the shop sign. "Is this what people would say. . . cute?" she asked.

"Yes, that's what people would say." Quinn peered inside, and it was the same scene inside with cupids, pink, frills, and bows. A pit settled on the bottom of his stomach; he had been rushed in his proposition to go inside — this shop unpleasantly reminded him a lot of Umbridge's office — he would know, he had, after all, watched hours of footage.

Daphne scrutinized the group of little chubby cherubs sprinkling pink confetti over the guests. "I would rather not if that's fine with you," she said.

"I am of the same mind," he said, spotting Roger Davis, the Ravenclaw Quidditch captain holding hands with a blonde, kissing over a sugar bowl. "I don't think today is the right day to enter the shop, maybe some other day."

"I think Three Broomsticks would be better," said Daphne, "I'm feeling a little parched."

Quinn nodded, "That would indeed be better."

The pair turned away from Madam Puddifoot's Tea Shop and headed to Madam Rosmerta's Three Broomstick Inn. The pub, as always, was flush with activity. It seemed that even Three Broomsticks couldn't get away from the spirit of Valentine's; Quinn could spot splashes of pink, red, and white around the establishment, though the tasteful utilization made Quinn comfortable.

"Let's find a place to sit," he said. Luckily they were able to find a

relatively quiet table in the seating area. "What will you have today?" he asked.

"A butterbeer will do," said Daphne.

Quinn came back with a glass mug of butterbeer, one tankard (Eddie's gift) full of hot chocolate peppermint, and a bowl of chips (crisps) for the table.

"That rain can put a hamper on such lovely weather," said Quinn. "A pity that it rained, especially how sunny the day had started as."

"February can do that to you," said Daphne, pushing a stray strand behind her ear as not to stain her hair with butterbeer. "Thankfully, it was only a light spray. A heavy pour would have been truly unfortunate."

"I saw that you brought some herbs from Dogweed and Deathcap. From the assortments you purchased, I would guess burn salves?"

"Yes. The schedule that you provided us," by 'us' Daphne meant the DA representative, "you have Incendio next on the list, so I thought it would be an excellent opportunity to try my hand on burn heals. If the brewing goes well, we would have the salves ready in case someone got burned."

A typical teenager wouldn't talk casually about supplying burn salves for many dozens of students out of her own pocket, but people sometimes forgot that Daphne was heir to the Greengrass fortune and had no shortage of coin. The boy sitting opposite to Daphne was similarly from an exuberant background, but unlike Daphne, who preferred to keep things simple, Quinn had an air of posh attached to him — everything from the subtle ambiance of the AID office to the way he dressed, screamed a subtle class.

"What do you think Tracey and Eddie are doing right now?" asked Daphne.

"Let's see if Eddie's on schedule," Quinn took a look at his pocket watch.

"Tracey doesn't fly much, so Eddie borrowed my broom so both of them could go flying today. There's an added thrill because of the flying ban, sticking it to Umbridge."

"I hope they stay away from the castle," said Daphne, glancing outside through a window, "I wouldn't want them to get into trouble."

"Marcus grilled Eddie. They will be flying someway up north, away from the castle," said Quinn. "Speaking of Marcus, did you hear about the tea party he's having with Luna and Astoria."

"You missed Madam Pomfrey," Daphne sighed, "I don't know how they were able to convince her to let them have inside the hospital wing.

Marcus and Luna might be quiet, but my sister is anything but. I fear that Madam Pomfrey might kick them out."

"Luna knows a one-way silencing ward, so it'll be fine if they made some noise. Madam Pomfrey might not look like it, but she enjoys a good tea time." Quinn was the authority on the matter. To this day, from time to time, he took a picnic basket to the hospital wing and set up a table to kick back and relax.

As the two talked and conversed, enjoying each other's company, a part of their minds were thinking that coming to Three Broomsticks might have been a poor decision. Both would have preferred a quieter setting with not so many people around them.

Daphne calmly sipped on her butterbeer, but she could notice the number of eyes on them. She simply smiled, nodded, and tittered along with Quinn, ignoring whatever was happening around her. Quinn was thinking along the same lines, thinking if it would've been better if they had just remained in Scrivenshaft, or if Madam Puddifoot's would somehow be a better choice.

The double door to the inn pushed open, for a cold gust of winter wind

further chilled by the downpour to enter the building, stroking the nearby occupants like death's touch, sending shivers down spines and goosebumps up the arms. The door closed behind four Gryffindors, the ones known to many as the Golden Squad.

"It's bloody crowded today," said Ron, shrugging his robe off his shoulders.

"It's Valentine's day," said Hermione matter of factly, as if it answered everything. She could spot couples dotting the pub, some sitting shoulder to shoulder, then there were those still new in their endeavors with some distance between them.

"Let's see if we can find a table," said Harry, scoping the place, "I see one; it's perfect for four."

"I'll get the drinks. What does everyone want to drink?" said Ivy and took the orders. She separated from the group and went to the bar while the other three headed to their table.

"Just when I thought the weather would warm up, the rain pulled in right down," said Ron, his mouth pinched, "it's cold out there in the air; it isn't like the Quidditch gear is particularly warm, my fingers feel like they would fall."

Harry heaved a sigh, averting his eyes as his posture sagged. His detention period with Umbridge had long ended, but vile women had refused to let his Quidditch ban lift. It had been so long he had taken his broom to the air, he had forgotten what it felt like to have the winds sweep his hair back, fluttering his robes. He even missed the chill prickling his skin when he sped through the air.

"It's okay, mate," said Ron, patting his best friend on the shoulder, "we will win the cup for you." The season had been looking good for Gryffindor; they were only in second above Hufflepuff and only below

Ravenclaw. The chances to make it to the finals were excellent.

Harry nodded outwardly with a thankful smile, but inside, those words didn't do much good. Harry wanted to play, he wanted to be on the field, wanted to chase down the snitch and be the reason the team won. He was happy for Ginny getting the seeker position, but he really wished that he was in her place.

'I really hope he makes a move quickly,' thought Harry. He really wanted to get back on the broom.

"Aye, isn't that West, there," said Ron.

Bubbles of surprise popped in Harry's mind — he was just thinking of Quinn — was the man really the devil. He goggled his eyes around the pub to see if Ron had spotted someone else.

"And that's Greengrass with him," said Hermione.

Harry followed her eyes and captured the Slytherin and Ravenclaw sitting together — to his surprise, Daphne Greengrass was laughing, albeit softly — a rare sight despite knowing the girl since they were little loitering children.

"That's rare, seeing those two alone together," Hermione said — usually, they would be accompanied by their respective friends.

"Reckon they're on a date?" said Ron. The Hogwarts rumor mill hadn't read the Golden Squad yet.

Hermione's eyes narrowed her eyes. It was unusual, but there was a chance that Ron was correct this time, she thought. But before she could accept the guess, she needed to know if it was true. Hermione scanned the room and found the perfect people to ask, sitting right behind her.

"Lavender," she called to the rubenesque one of the Gryffindor duet who worshipped the paper on which Witch Weekly was printed.

Lavender Brown turned back, and so did her exotic partner of Lavender,

Parvati Patil.

" "Hello, Hermione~, " " they said in a sing-a-song duet.

"Yes, hello," Hermione subtly jutted to the subject of her query. "Those two. What's the deal there? Did they come alone, or are they with others?"

"You don't know?" Lavender said and then giggled along with Parvati.

"They're here on a date~, " she stretched it long, "everyone knows it."

"I was there, you know," Paravati dreamily sighed, "Quinn arrived in the entrance hall and started with gifting Daphne the most beautiful sapphire flower that, with a touch from Daphne, turned into a stunning wrist ring band," Parvati glanced over Hermione's head and suddenly said, "Oh hey, Ivy."

Hermione jerked her head back and felt a quiver in her stomach. She turned to see standing behind her was her best friend with a tray in hand. Ivy wasn't looking at Hermione; her eyes were solely focused on the pair sitting a distance from them. She watched the two laugh and giggle; the boy she liked was clearly leaning forward — she could tell that he was enjoying herself. On the other side, she could see the relaxed shoulder of Daphne Greengrass — for her(Daphne), it was a big deal.

"Ivy," said Hermione with a pained gaze.

Ivy set down the tray on the table, her movements deliberately slow.

With her hands free, they went up to her chest, grabbing a fistful of her cardigan and shirt. Her eyes were still checked on to that table. Ivy took an uneven step back, her head finally tearing away, but now her head hung low. She spun away and hastily rushed out, leaving behind a lingering grimace. Hermione hurriedly got up from the table and chased after Ivy, nigh close to stumbling as she pushed out of the door to the inn.

"What was that?" said Ron.

"I. . . I don't know," Harry stared at the inn door as if waiting for Hermione and Ivy to return any moment. When the door didn't open, he turned to Quinn and Daphne's table. She hadn't told him anything, he thought, not liking that he didn't know something about his twins. But, what if? Harry gazed at Quinn, wondering — what if. . .

Outside, Hermione came to a heaving halt. She panted with her curly hair hanging down as she gripped her knees. Hermione pulled her gaze from the spot of brown peeking through the snow and looked at Ivy.

Ivy was gazing up at the sky, her hands clenched into fists, arms stiffly stuck to the sides, rigid like steel rods. "I thought this might come someday," she said, "I was preparing for it, you know. And I just got something great, something even she didn't know about, though it would pull him closer." — but she was too late! Daphne had clenched the chance before her.

No, she wasn't late. It was only the first day. She thought, as for the wrist ring band that she had clearly seen sitting on Daphne's wrist. Quinn had a tendency to give gifts — he had made Fleur a necklace, and look how that turned. Yes, everything wasn't over yet. She had her trump card, and there were plenty of chances to apply.

But then her knees went weak. She ended up on the ground, with her legs folded backward. Despite the speech of the grandees in her thoughts, seeing Quinn enjoying himself no a date with someone else did her squeeze on her heart, raising a burn up her body.

"It's nothing," she said, "I just need to try harder. It's only one date. . ."

For now, she wanted to go back to Hogwarts and crawl into her bed.

. . .

After spending some time talking, Quinn and Daphne exited the Three

Broomsticks. They continued on their Hogsmeade crawl, with Daphne buying supplies for months in preparation for her OWLs and Quinn tagged along with her, keeping her entertained. By the time Daphne had checked everything in her head checklist, I was already late, so both decided to return to the castle.

"It turned out to become a shopping date," said Quinn.

Daphne nodded. "That it did."

Going around the village with company (friends) was nothing new for both Daphne and Quinn, they did this every time they came down to Hogsmeade. It could be said, that the date was uneventful, even a bit boring, but both were fine with it. They were worried in their hearts that it might go the wrong way, but boring meant that nothing went wrong. For them boring was good.

"Then, how would you rate me and today?" asked Quinn as they walked at a sedate pace on the Hogsmeade tiled roads, "what was that you liked?"

"Hmm, that's to be something to be thought more," said Daphne coyly. She wasn't expecting for the day to turn into a shopping date. Her thoughts were that they would go straight to Three Broomsticks and spend time there and nothing more, but roaming around with Quinn, listening to his stories was surely the highlight for her.

As they moved closer to the castle, the distance between the two also became closer. From standing a couple feet apart from each other, they slowly inched closer to each other, soon they were walking with shoulder nigh from touching. The distance was important to both; neither allowed just anyone to enter their personal space, and were only open to their close friends. Right now, there was no sense of discomfort.

Between the two, no one knew who it was, but it started with the side of

their hands touching — they immediately pulled away. But then their hands came close again, and this time, their pinkie fingers intertwined, and soon they were holding hands.

Neither knew who it was, it may have been Quinn, or it might be Daphne, or may be both, but their hands touched each other. Both pulled away immediately. They looked at each other, searching each other's eyes.

They removed their eyes and looked to the front, but they had smiles on their faces. Their hands met each other again, this time they didn't pull away — both gingerly intertwined their pinkie with the others before Quinn took the lead and took Daphne's entire hand into his.

They had held each other's hand before while dancing, but this felt different, this felt different.

Quinn beamed brightly as Daphne to his side looked dazzling with a brush of ethereal red on her cheeks. No words were exchanged as after a day of talking, the pair decided to opt-in for silence, enjoying the moment and making a memory.

"Quinn!"

"Daphne!"

Their hands slipped out of each other's soft grasps as they turned to the familiar voices to see Eddie and Tracey walk their way, joining them at the end of the day.

Tracey and Eddie eagerly exchanged what they did today, making them impromptu judges for their two-part date. While they did that, Quinn and Daphne listened to them with one ear and let it from the other as they got themselves busy stealing small glances from each other.

The date had come to an end.

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Quinn West - MC - Maybe keeping it simple isn't bad.

Daphne Greengrass - Ice Queen - 'His grip is firm,' she thought.

Ivy Potter - Needs some time alone - Want to go burrow into her bed.

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If you have any ideas regarding the magic you want to see in this fiction or want to offer some ideas regarding the progression. Move onto the DISCORD Server and blast those ideas.

The link is in the bio!

235. Chapter 235: Second Wave,

First Firing

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Sheets of parchment hung pinned to the wall.

Eddie frowned, glancing up at the matt brown bulletin board as people gathered around him (well, he was part of the crowd), whispered in buzzing discussion about the words printed on the sheets of parchment — titled in angry red and with content body punched out in bold black — that hung high above their head, as if looking down on them as plebians that needed to follow the words like royal or even divine orders.

"This again?" he said. "What got her knickers in a wad again? I thought we were doing fine." He would have preferred more displeased, but after experiencing it so many, he had been dulled to it — desensitized was the term his best friend (the smart one) would use.

The bulletin board that Eddie stared up at was covered with newly-minted Educational Decrees fresh out of the printers, printed on tan

parchment. On every decree, Dolores Umbridge's name was bolded out; in some ways making the name more important than the contents, and Eddie didn't know if it was just him, but her signature seemed angrier, rougher, brasher than the older ones as if Umbridge had penned them with the nip digging into the parchments.

This was the second Umbridge had decreed a wave of orders. The first time she had done this was a day to remember; the bulletin board had needed to be changed to a bigger one because of the sheer amount of Educational Decrees that were decreed to be posted permanently (ordered in another Educational Decree) had left no space for other notices.

Even the new one was already looking like it would need to be replaced. After all, Umbridge decreed a couple of them every week, sprinkling them like they were diary entries. It was an apt comparison as people had begun speculating Umbridge's mood by the numbers of decrees she issued in a week.

"She must be really pissed for a second dump of this shit," Eddie snorted.

"What do you think? Has she finally gone bonkers?"

Marcus, standing by Eddie's side, didn't reply. His eye perused across the board, carefully browsing every word, thinking what changes would this wave bring to Hogwarts and his along with his friend's life. He wanted to be the first to know if there were going to be any big shifts in Hogwarts, would there be any significant threats to DA that would require adjustments to counter.

"Number fifty. . . bans from Hogwarts all literature written by non-wizards or half-breeds

Number fifty-two. . . requires students to consent to allow their owl post to be checked for illegal contraband.

Number fifty-five. . . requires any complaints about Hogwarts or its staff to be made in writing to the High Inquisitor.

Number fifty-six. . . confines pets to common rooms and dormitories and owls to the owlery.

Number sixty. . . imposes restrictions on the usage of the school library and common rooms

Number sixty-three. . . encourages students to be forthcoming regarding suspicious or outlawed activities from their professors and peers.

Number sixty-four. . . allows the establishment of the Inquisitorial Squad.  
. . . what is the Inquisitorial Squad?

Number sixty-seven. . . gives the High Inquisitor the power to confiscate any unauthorized book from students.

And, number sixty-eight. . . forbids the use of red howlers inside Hogwarts. . . that's for the Weasley twins, I guess, "Marcus sighed after reading through the decrees. Some of them weren't going to hinder him anyway, but there were some outright annoying to him as a Ravenclaw — banning books by half-breeds and non-wizards was poppycock and highly insulting to the name of an institution of learning.

Marcus was pulled out of his thoughts when he heard a muffled commotion coming from what he thought might be coming from outside the entrance hall.

"What's that?" said Marcus.

"I don't know, but let's go take a look, shall we?" Eddie said, looking at the oak door.

The crowd gathered at the bulletin board began moving towards the door, attracted to the commotion.

The screams were indeed coming from the entrance hall; they grew louder as Eddie and Marcus ran toward the stone steps leading up from

the dungeons. When he reached the steps leading outside, they found the front of the oak gats packed. Students had come flooding out of the Great Hall, where dinner was still in progress, to see what was going on. Others had crammed themselves around whatever seemed to have caused the commotion. Eddie pushed forward through a knot of tall Slytherins, Marcus following after him. They saw that the onlookers had formed a great ring, some of them looking shocked, others even frightened.

McGonagall was directly opposite them on the other side of the hall; she looked as though what she was watching made her feel faintly sick.

Trelawney was standing in the middle of the entrance hall with her wand in one hand and an empty sherry bottle in the other, looking utterly mad.

Her hair was sticking up on end, her glasses were lopsided so that one eye was magnified more than the other; her innumerable shawls and scarves were trailing haphazardly from her shoulders, giving the impression that she was falling apart at the seams. Two large trunks lay on the floor beside her, one of them upside down; it looked very much as though it had been thrown down the stairs after her. Trelawney was staring, apparently terrified, at something that Marcus and Eddie could not see from their position but that seemed to be standing at the foot of her.

"No!" she shrieked. "NO! This cannot be happening. . . . It cannot . . . I refuse to accept it!"

Just when Eddie and Marcus reached the front, they heard a high girlish voice, sounding callously amused, and instantly they knew who Trelawney was afraid of.

"You didn't realize this was coming?" said the voice which could only belong to Umbridge. "Incapable though you are of predicting even tomorrow's weather, you must surely have realized that your pitiful

performance during my inspections, and lack of any improvement, would make it inevitable you would be sacked?"

"You c-can't!" howled Trelawney, tears streaming down her face from behind her enormous lenses, "you c-can't sack me! I've b-been here sixteen years! H-Hogwarts is m-my h-home!"

"It was your home," said Umbridge, and Marcus was revolted to see the enjoyment stretching her toadlike face as she watched Trelawney sink, sobbing uncontrollably, onto one of her trunks, "until an hour ago, when the Minister of Magic countersigned the order for your dismissal. Now kindly remove yourself from this hall. You are embarrassing us."

But she stood and watched, with an expression of gloating enjoyment, as Professor Trelawney shuddered and moaned, rocking backward and forward on her trunk in paroxysms of grief. Marcus heard a sob to his left and looked around. Lavender Brown and Parvati Patil were both crying silently, their arms around each other. Then he heard footsteps.

McGonagall had broken away from the spectators, marched straight up to Trelawney, and was patting her firmly on the back while withdrawing a large handkerchief from within her robes.

"There, there, Sybill . . . Calm down. . . . Blow your nose on this. . . . It's not as bad as you think, now. . . . You are not going to have to leave Hogwarts . . ."

"Oh really, Professor McGonagall?" said Umbridge in a deadly voice, taking a few steps forward. "And your authority for that statement is . . . ?"

"Mine," said a deep voice.

The crowd around the oak door parted, students scuttled out of the way as Dumbledore appeared in the entrance. What he had been doing out in the grounds, Marcus could not imagine, but there was something

impressive about the sight of him framed in the doorway against an oddly misty night.

"That's really fucking cool, init," said Eddie with a toothy grin on his face, "I want to do that, definitely."

Leaving the doors wide behind him, he strode forward through the circle of onlookers toward the place where Trelawney sat, tearstained and trembling, upon her trunk, McGonagall alongside her.

"Yours, Professor Dumbledore?" said Umbridge with a singularly unpleasant little laugh, her eyes acidly glared at Dumbledore. "I'm afraid you do not understand the position. I have here" — she pulled a parchment scroll from within her robes — "an Order of Dismissal signed by myself and the Minister of Magic. Under the terms of Educational Decree Number Twenty-three, the High Inquisitor of Hogwarts has the power to inspect, place upon probation, and sack any teacher she — that is to say, I — feel is not performing up to the standard required by the Ministry of Magic. I have decided that Professor Trelawney is not up to scratch. I have dismissed her."

To the great surprise of many, Dumbledore continued to smile. He looked down at Professor Trelawney, who was still sobbing and choking on her trunk, and said, "You are quite right, of course, Professor Umbridge. As High Inquisitor, you have every right to dismiss my teachers. However, you do not have the authority to send them away from the castle. I am afraid," he went on, with a courteous little bow, "that the power to do that still resides with the headmaster, and it is my wish that Professor Trelawney continues to live at Hogwarts."

At this, Trelawney gave a wild little laugh in which a hiccup was barely hidden.

"No — no, I'll g-go, Dumbledore! I sh-shall l-leave Hogwarts and s-seek

my fortune elsewhere —"

"No," said Dumbledore sharply. "It is my wish that you remain, Sybill." He turned to Professor McGonagall.

"Might I ask you to escort Sybill back upstairs, Professor McGonagall?"

"Of course," said McGonagall. "Up you get, Sybill . . ."

Sprout came hurrying forward out of the crowd and grabbed Trelawney's other arm. Together they guided her past Umbridge and up the marble stairs. Flitwick went scurrying after them, his wand held out before him; he squeaked, "Locomotor trunks!" and Trelawney's luggage rose into the air and proceeded up the staircase after her, Flitwick bringing up the rear.

"Awesome," said Eddie, clapping lightly, "they are like a team with Dumbledore as the captain! I also want to do that! Marcus, you can be Sprout. We will give Flitwick to Luna. Quinn can be McGonagall. I, of course, will be Dumbledore."

Umbridge stood stock-still, staring at Dumbledore, who continued to smile benignly.

"And what," she said in a whisper that nevertheless carried all around, "are you going to do with her once I appoint a new Divination teacher who needs her lodgings?"

"Oh, that won't be a problem; we have ample space," said Dumbledore pleasantly, pointing to the grand castle behind him. "Also, Dolores?" he said in a voice tinged deeper. "It seems that you are forgetting the authority of the headmaster — MY authority — don't forget, that while you might be the High Inquisitor, but I am the headmaster. This is my school. I am in charge of the Professors. In charge of the house-elves. In charge of the students. Do not forget that," in the end, Dumbledore was standing tall and his background, the students of Hogwarts were all

staring at Umbridge with the ancient castle lit up in the night sky.

Eddie's eyes sparkling with a starry light: "Complete son of the wand this man is!"

Umbridge's tight smile twitched. She clasped her hand at her front. "Well, then, you would be happy to meet the new Divination teacher."

"That won't be necessary," said Dumbledore, smiling merrily as if thinking of joyous, "This time around, I didn't fail to find a new teacher," pointing out the reason why Umbridge was here, "you see, I have already found us a new Divination teacher, and he will prefer lodgings on the ground floor."

"You've found — ?" said Umbridge shrilly. "You've found? Might I remind you, Dumbledore, that under Educational Decree Twenty-two —"

"— the Ministry has the right to appoint a suitable candidate if — and only if — the headmaster is unable to find one," said Dumbledore. "And I am happy to say that on this occasion, I have succeeded. May I introduce you?"

"Ooh! he's on a roll!" said Eddie feeling the vibe.

Dumbledore pointed behind Umbridge, and for the first time, everyone noticed that the area was covered in a drifting white mist.

Everyone heard hooves.

There was a shocked murmur around the crowd, and those nearest to the mist hastily moved backward, some of them tripping over in their haste to clear a path for the newcomer.

Through the mist came a face that could be seen in the Forbidden Forest: white-blond hair and astonishingly blue eyes, the head and torso of a man joined to the palomino body of a horse.

Dumbledore smiled happily to a thunderstruck Umbridge. "I think you'll find him suitable," he said.

From a hallway window on the first floor, looking down at the area outside the front oak door, a pair of stone-grey eyes watched everything unfolding away from everyone.

He had just exited the vault for the day, and seeing that it was still time for the feast, he was going down to the great hall to get some food. On his way, though, he saw a crowd moving out of the castle, so he went to see what it was all about to come across a familiar scene.

"Shit," said Quinn, his voice filling the hallway, "I forgot about the centaur."

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"I bet you wish you had Divination, now, don't you, Quinn," asked Eddie, smirking.

It was evening time a couple days after the sacking of Trelawney, and Eddie was doing some regular maintenance on his broom and carefully moving his hand as not to make any mistakes — in the air, his broom was his greatest asset after himself.

"Not really," said Quinn indifferently, who was reading *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho, a fiction book for a change. It was a treat; the second room was almost over, only a couple material blocks remained. "I've never really liked horses."

He turned a page, reading the beautifully written words.

"He's not a horse; he's a centaur!" said a Ravenclaw girl, sounding shocked. They were in the common room.

"A gorgeous centaur . . ." sighed another girl, a fifth-year.

"Either way, he's still got four legs," said Quinn coolly. In no way was he discriminatory against centaurs, but Firenze was a problem — he was the

one last year when Quinn was exploring the Forbidden Forest who figured out that there was a child under the Noir transformative suit. That was the problem.

If Firenze could figure out that, who knew if he could figure out his identity. Quinn didn't have much expertise in Divination and the predictive arts. He didn't have the gift of sight, and as such, Quinn didn't see any use in learning about that subject because it wasn't any use to him. Moreover, Quinn had absolutely zero ideas about the Centaur Culture's Divination. He had no idea what level of predictive powers they had their hands in.

'I'm going to stay away from the divinating horseman. As long as Firenze is concerned, Quinn West doesn't exist,' thought Quinn.

"When do you think she's going to can Hagrid?" asked Eddie.

"Soon, very soon. I am surprised that she didn't can him with Trelawney."

"That bitch probably wanted to stroke her sadistic desires by kicking them out one at a time."

"That sounds like her."

"What do you think about the Inquisitor Squad?"

"What about them?"

"I mean, most of them are glorified Umbridge's dogs. All from Slytherin."

"I won't put it that way, but you're correct."

"You worried about them?"

"No, I am not. I am a Prefect; they can't order me around."

"What about the cluster?" said Eddie. As per the extended rules, DA wasn't to be mentioned outside, and words like group, organization, society, club weren't to be used. That's why members started to use words like cluster, bunch, pack when mentioning DA.

"Marcus and other leads will take care of it. They have been doing a great

job keeping all of it under wraps," said Quinn, lightly pinching the top corner of his book's page to turn it over.

However, the next second, his eyes stopped on the first sentence of the page. Eddie's words had started a chain of thought in the coils of his brain. He sighed and glanced at the page number on the bottom before closing the book — he didn't need bookmarks — and set it between his leg and the armrest of his armrest.

He stared into the air. While the DA representatives were indeed doing a good job, there was one problem threatening the anonymity of DA, which hadn't their minds. 'It's a perspective problem,' he thought. The possibility of external factors influencing the DA members not entering their minds wasn't strange. None of them were thinking outside the walls of Hogwarts that kept the ugly and complex real-world out.

'I guess I would need to talk to the original sneak,' thought Quinn. After all, she was still in DA and, from his memories of DA session, observing the members, she was as dissatisfied about being involved as she was in the original.

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Quinn West - MC - Has decided to subtract horse from his life.

Eddie Carmichael - Taking notes - That was legit cool. Old man has style.

Marcus Belby - Is still an introvert - Working to keep secrets the way they are.

DA - We are not a group - We don't exist.

Dolores Umbridge - High Inquisitor - Horrified at the new teacher.

Albus Dumbledore - Headmaster - I hired before you fired.

FictionOnlyReader - Author - Please recommend published novels that you think are beautifully written, as in the style of writing — wordsmithing. I'm trying to improve my writing style.

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If you have any ideas regarding the magic you want to see in this fiction or want to offer some ideas regarding the progression. Move onto the DISCORD Server and blast those ideas.

The link is in the bio!

236. Chapter 236: Ensuring

Secrecy The OldWay

If you want to read ahead of the posting schedule then head over to my Patreón.

All the chapters would still be posted here, but you can support me with a donation and get chapters earlier than usual as a bonus.

Link in the Bio/Profile

"Please remember everyone, beware of the Inquisitor Squad," said Marcus. It was the end of another night of DA sessions with everyone ready to return to their dorms. "Especially, Gryffindors. . . The Inquisitor Squad's detention record is mostly made up of your house — if you encounter one, please steer clear, and if you do get a session with Umbridge, please remember to report it to one of the representatives."

The humiliation during the Minister's visit at the hands of Dumbledore wasn't met with silence but with an Education Decree wave in which a decree constituted the creation of the Inquisitor Squad, responsible for maintaining discipline and order in Hogwarts. Justified by the spike of detention rate in the school, which in truth was because of Umbridge handing out detentions like hotcakes to anyone she could find. She had created the problem and now had brought in a solution to counter it — but in reality, all it was a ruse to increase Umbridge's authority in Hogwarts.

"To the Slytherins, please keep us informed if you hear anything the

Inquisitor Squad might be planning," Marcus said, stressing on the topic.

"And to Eddie, please avoid picking fights with the Inquisitor Squad. It's the one-way ticket to getting banned from Quidditch, and I'm not sure you'd be excited about that."

"I never pick fights!" came the reply, dissatisfied and defiant. "They are the ones who are being bloody cretins."

"That's not my problem. Whatever you do, don't end up in detention," Marcus said and thought if there was something else left to address.

"That's it from my side. If there's nothing else, we can close this session and end for the night."

"I actually have something to say." Eyes turned to Quinn, who stood in the inner part of the Room of Requirements, away from the door. "I would like a few people to stay behind. I have something to converse with them." Quinn glimpsed around the confused DA crowd all looking at. "Marietta Edgecombe, Luca Caruso, Irfan Mushtaq, and Graham Romsey, please stay behind while everyone else leaves. I would appreciate the privacy," he smiled towards everyone. "That would be all. I wish everyone else a good night."

Suddenly, all eyes moved to the four people asked to stay behind. The same question sprouted in everyone's minds — What did Quinn want with the four?

Ivy Potter, the elected leader of DA, stepped forward and posed the question in everyone's mind. "What is this about?" she asked.

Quinn turned to the girl who had stepped out from the crowd. "I just have something to say to these four."

"Is this personal or about DA?"

"It is."

"Then I'd like to be kept in the loop. I'd be staying behind."

Quinn noticed the way she had worded her sentence. "That's fine with me. You can stay behind," he said.

"What about the other representatives? Do they need to be here?"

"Their presence isn't needed. You can communicate the happenings to them later." Quinn subtly glanced at Daphne, the Slytherin representative, and blinked his eyes — I'll tell you later, they said. He didn't miss the smile in her eyes, something that one could only notice after spending much time with Daphne Greengrass.

Marietta Edgecombe, sixth-year Ravenclaw, one of the four asked to stay behind, raised her voice. She had a pinched expression and arms folded across her chest. "Can we do whatever this is sometime later? It's getting late, and I have assignments to get through. How about we take this up the next time we assemble? It'd be more convenient for everyone. I'm sure everyone feels this way," she turned around to look at the other three, seeking support.

"A little time spent talking won't hurt your assignments, Edgecombe. And I'm sure someone as smart as you have her assignments ready to submit before time," said Quinn, smiling politely, not genuinely.

Marietta watched Quinn furtively as he picked a lint of his robes. He wasn't interested in whatever she had to say. She glanced at the other three, but they turned their eyes from hers.

Cowards! she thought.

Soon after, the DA population left, leaving only six people in the vast and now exceedingly empty Room of Requirements. The atmosphere in the room was ambiguous — Marietta Edgecombe was tapping her foot against the floor, her jaw clenched; Luca Caruso, Irfan Mushtaq, and Graham Romsey were tingling their fingers and toes; Ivy has a pensive expression, repeatedly glancing towards Quinn, it wasn't long she had

seen him sitting together with Daphne.

"Now," Quinn spoke with his hands behind his back, "the reason I have asked you four here is to address an issue that has become prominent due to recent events involving the Educational Decrees, the Inquisitor Squad, and the overall Dolores Umbridge situation with her gaining more power in Hogwarts."

Quinn noted the slight shuffle in the four people as they shifted their weight at his words.

"One of the important principles or to say rules of DA is that," he made a short pause, "we don't exist; we are as real as the points given to Gryffindor by Snape," there was no response from anyone — it had been repeated so many times that everyone was way past being sick of it. "The reason why this rule was introduced is to ensure everyone's safety and freedom from Umbridge's pesky little thumb. Our efforts have been going splendidly well, with not a peep of DA to be heard from the mouth of an outsider.

Keeping our anonymity has been of utmost importance, especially know when Umbridge is trying to find something — anything — wrong in Hogwarts so that she could usurp control. . . I'm sure none of us desires that. Which is the reason it's high time that we strengthen our efforts to keep operating."

Ivy frowned in confusion. They already had this discussion among the DA representatives, deployed new measures, and made sure to freshen the gravity of the situation in everyone's mind.

"Why are you saying this right now?" she asked, glancing at the four. A thought flashed in her mind. She turned to face the four, her eyes squinted as her tone became confrontational. "Did these four do something. . . did they spoke about DA to someone outside?"

"No! I didn't say anything!" said Graham Romsey, stepping forward in a hurry.

"Neither did I," said Luca Caruso; he was a bit calmer, though his pace gave his nervousness away.

Irfan Mushtaq shook his head and shrugged. "Me neither."

All Marietta did was narrow her at Quinn.

"I am well aware that none of you have said anything about DA to anyone," said Quinn.

Ivy was stumped. If that wasn't the case, why did he ask these people to stay behind? She tilted her head in confusion. "Then why are we here?" she asked with furrowed brows.

"Caruso, Romsey, Mushtaq, and Edgecombe," said Quinn, "all have parents who work in the Ministry." His words set a tension in the mentioned four. "Normally, that won't be the problem," he turned to Ivy, "your father works in the Ministry as well, but unlike you," he pointed at the four, "their parents work in a position below Umbridge's — positions over which Umbridge have a lot of power, where she can exert a significant amount of pressure."

A deafening silence fell over the room; the matter was out in the open, and silence that presided over spoke volumes. The four with parents were at some point had become aware of the risk they were putting their parents in by joining a group like DA.

"I fear that because of that reason, you might come under pressure to secure your parent's job at the Ministry by maybe. . . selling out DA to Umbridge," said Quinn. He raised his hand to stop the incoming rebuttals. "I'm not saying that you'll be doing so. There's no sense in accusing of something that hasn't happened yet. But that doesn't rule out the event happening. So, right now, I would like to present to all of you a

proposition."

"Quinn, wait," said Ivy, "maybe we should talk about this first —"

"What proposition?" said Marietta Edgecombe, cutting off Ivy.

"I will allow all four of you to exit DA right here, right now," said Quinn immediately.

"Quinn!" Ivy exclaimed. This was spiralling out of control. Decisions like this were to be made with the agreement of the group.

Quinn continued to stare at the four. "There's a condition," he said. He couldn't just let them go without keeping leverage on his side for insurance. "Your names will remain on the original signing document. It will be proof of your involvement in DA, effectively tying you up with DA. You will not be allowed to mention anything about DA. If you decide to give us away, we will drag you down with us. Plus, you won't like what is to happen if you decide to betray the group."

Ivy withheld a gasp at Quinn's words. The knowledge about the original signing document being a jinxed parchment was a secret only known to her and Hermione — it was the last fail-safe to identify the traitor, the sneak.

"So, how about it? The conditions of the deal are clear. Any takers?"

"I will take it," said Marietta Edgecombe, straightforwardly. She never wanted to take part in DA. Because of Cho, her best friend's constant instance and nagging, she decided to join DA and participate in this farce. Her dissatisfaction only grew with every session, where she was forced to leave the safety of her dorm and risk getting caught.

"Excellent, you're free to go," said Quinn and turned to the other three.

"What about you guys? Do you want to take my offer up?"

The three pondered on their decisions silently for a few minutes, and only some contemplation did they decide that they would stay with DA.

"I'm staying," said Irfan Mushtaq, as chill as a sloth resting on a tress. "My mum's not a big fan of Umbridge. Plus, she's always complaining about how bad her job is, so she won't mind if she gets canned and my dad makes good money, so no problems there."

Quinn chuckled. "Your mum sounds like a fun person." He turned to Marietta. "Well, Edgecombe, it seems our time together as fellow DA members have to come to an end."

Marietta scoffed with her chin held high. "Good, getting out of this farce is the best thing that could have happened to me." She noticed the expressions of slight disgust and anger others were giving her, "Don't look at me like that. What do you think is going to happen? That learning all this will make you top duelers, oh please, don't kid yourself; this is just all of you playing around, pretending that you're doing something great. Defense Against The Dark Arts is just a subject that, it's not if you don't learn it, your life will end. You know what, she might be not pleasant, but Umbridge makes some good points. There's a reason why we have Aurors; they will protect us. We don't need to learn all these spells and charms." She looked at Ivy, "Just because her brother says that You-Know-Who's back doesn't mean that he's really back, and I have always thought that Dumbledore was a whacky in the head — no wonder he believed Potter's words so quickly. So, I suggest you all drop the asinine fantasy of defeating the You-Know-Who and come back to reality; he's not back and will never be back. I bet you this: In some days, we will get the news that the Aurors have arrested the escaped prisoners, they will be shipped back to Azkaban where they belong, and everything will go back to normal."

Quinn, Ivy, along with the other three, watched in struck silence as she rambled on like a locomotive train, piping out word after word as the

train did smoke. Even her unusually high-pitched voice sounded like a blaring train whistle going non-stop.

When Marietta finally became silent, Quinn stepped forward and raised his hand for a handshake with her. "It was a short time, but I thank you for supporting DA, even as unwilling as it was."

Marietta clasped Quinn's hand and said, "I thought more of you, Quinn. I thought you would be more realistic and not engage in this sort of farce. But to my surprise, you were here, and not only that, but you also brought in your friends, and more than that, you also brought a whole group of Slytherin into this."

Quinn stared at Marietta, who seemed to exercise the gift of speech to the limit with a thin-lipped smile. "It seems I haven't stood up to your expectations for me."

Marietta let go of Quinn's hand. "I hope you'd continue to keep DA a secret. While I don't like this, I do care about Cho. It would be sad if she got into trouble. Especially with how good things are going with Cedric. Sometimes I can't understand how did she bag someone like him. Boys can be so superficial, just looking for looks."

Just when they thought that there might be one good bone in Marietta's body, she took it in her hand and cracked it over, making it as crooked as every other.

"Thank you, Marietta," said Quinn and gestured towards the door.

Marietta puffed up her chest and walked towards the door with her chin held high. But she had taken a few steps when she felt a jolt hitting her back, sending prickling creeping through her body like a hundred-legged centipede crawling on her skin. She could feel her body, her muscles turn stiff like stone, and before she could even look down, Marietta felt her neck rigid, leaving her looking at a spot a few feet away from her.

She tried to speak something, but her voice had seemed to betray her as not a peep came out of her throat. She pushed harder, tried to yell, screech, and shout, but the result was the same silence, setting a tinge of panic in her, but she couldn't even show it with her entire body that seemed to have gone comatose.

But then she heard. "I'm sorry, Marietta, but we aren't over with." She listened to the sound of footsteps moving near her until the figure dressed in Ravenclaw robes stood in front of her, and because she couldn't move her neck or her eyes, she could only stare at the legs and boots. But she knew who it was.

"As much as I trust you, DA simply can't risk its existence get out," she heard the voice of Quinn speak slow and flat. "We're going to add just a little something to you to ensure that you will have help if and when someday you decide to make the mistake of betraying the people you love so much."

A hand entered her sight, and it was holding a wand. She watched with her breathing turning heavier by the second as the wand touched her throat, and she could feel the cold touch of wood against her skin and the tip pushing against her larynx.

The cold wand turned warm as a stream entered her body through her neck. It felt like she had gulped down a warm drink quickly, lining her insides with a warm and fuzzy feeling, but she wasn't feeling comfortable; this was sending deeply unsettling shivers down her entire body.

"If you ever decide to betray DA in any form. Speak about it, write about it, walk here to reveal the location, point out members to reveal their involvement or any other way you can think of — remember what I told you about, Intent is an integral part of magic — your eyes will stop

seeing the light, your voice will betray you, your skin will steal away your touch, and you'll again turn into stone.

Beware, Mariette; you won't want to turn deaf, mute, and blind because the curse will make that state stay there for a while before you get you to return to normal. If you get misguided again and try to go on the wrong path again, the curse will return to play with you, and this time it will stay for longer. The more times you try, the more you'll be able to enjoy and appreciate life and experience it with your sense of taste and smell."

Marietta wanted to scream, struggle, free herself of her stone-like state, and hit Quinn with everything she had, but she was helpless as a fish out of her water. Hearing Quinn's word settled a deep sense of pitting despair; it clenched like a hand gripping down on her beating heart.

As this was happening, Ivy watched and heard what had happened. In experiencing so, she was reminded who Quinn West was. She recalled the man who had entombed her into a wall because she impersonated his friend. Ivy was reminded of the man who had bound her and Hermione in his office and threatened to ruin her and her brother's life. This was the same person who had implicated her and Hermione deeper by tricking them into coming along with them back in time.

It reminded her that it might have been because she had become friends with Quinn that he decided not to do something like what he had done to Marietta, or exactly like what he had done to Marietta when she found his secret Cursed Vault.

After that, Quinn sent away a heaving and scared silly Marietta and nervous other three, but not before instilling a good sense of motivation in the minds of Caruso, Romsey, Mushtaq to keep quiet about what had happened her to themselves, leaving only Ivy and him in the room.

"Hey, sorry about that," said Quinn. "I didn't mean to ignore you back

there, but I had to do it now with only them and you present. It would have not gotten the approval if we had put it to a vote. I had to move quickly and decisively for this to be effective."

"Will she really suffer all that?"

"Hmm, partially," said Quinn, making Ivy look at him with confusion.

"She would feel what I said a couple of times. But I'm not capable enough to freeze her entire body and take three out of five senses time after time for eternity. After a few times, the curse will start to wane and eventually fade away. I can, of course, cast it again. But I'm sure the fear would keep her away from violating the rules."

Ivy once again stared at him, and her heart told her to say it, speak, tell him outright. She had observed him with 'her' today, but both didn't seem much different from what they usually were, which meant it wasn't still late, and she could get in.

Ivy stared at Quinn, but the more she stared at him, the more her thoughts went to the events of Valentine's day. She broke eye contact and hurriedly spoke. "Yes, I know. I mean, I understand why you did it. I myself would've shot you down if you had put it to vote."

Quinn chuckled with a refreshing smile. "I know. I wouldn't want it any other way."

She once again looked at her, and her heart told her to say it, speak, tell him outright. She had observed him with 'her' today, but both didn't seem much different from what they usually were, which meant it wasn't still late, and she could get in.

Yes, she should do it. She was going to do it. Now, right now.

Ivy opened her mouth. "It's okay. I don't blame you. We should go back; it's getting late. Everyone must be wondering what are we doing."

She couldn't say it.

.

Quinn West - MC - Sin-Quinn was still at its base, still him.

Ivy Potter - Conflicted - The word of heart stopped by the fear of mind.

Marietta Edgcombe - Cursed - Pretended nothing happened when she went back and went to sleep without saying a word.

FictionOnlyReader - Author - I tried something new. I don't know if it will show up, but if it does, what do you think?

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If you have any ideas regarding the magic you want to see in this fiction or want to offer some ideas regarding the progression. Move onto the DISCORD Server and blast those ideas.

The link is in the synopsis!

237. Chapter 237: Third Room:

Piping Pressure

If you want to read ahead of the posting schedule then head over to my Patreón.

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Link in the Bio/Profile

The sound of heavy stone dragging across a stone floor echoed in the vast room. It was the gritty sound one could hear when a stone pestle was ground against the grainy surface of the mortar, just louder.

Quinn stared at the material cube; it had just come out of the wall, turning white to show that it was this one's turn to be worked upon. He turned back away from the material cube, and on the opposite end of the room stood the entrance with the chasm sitting halfway across. He had finally reached the end of the challenging period of unending tribulations of repeated transmutation.

"With this," said Quinn, "I will be free."

He closed his eyes and unwrapped the memory of the object to be replicated that sat on the apparatus cube in the chasm. Ever since the objects had shown to have internal flaws, Quinn had ditched measuring through scaling equipment and turned to Earth sense to scan every inch of the object and save the information in his mind to be used during replication.

Quinn placed his hand on the material cube, and his closed eyes squeezed tighter with brows furrowing when he felt the coarse texture against his fingers and palm. Coarse material, in his experience, wasn't good when it came to replication — it was too grainy and had too many air pockets that needed to be worked around and eliminated to get a perfect replica. 'Definitely a product of alchemy,' thought Quinn as his magic trickled into the stone. The stone required exuberant amounts of magic to be turned from the stable to the flux state through which the magic of transmutation worked. There were naturally occurring rocks with similar properties, but the way the stone was structured screamed artificial to Quinn.

He pulled his hand back and came out, stuck to the inside of his hand was a viscous clay-like gelatinous blob — it was the transformative state that made the transformation of a substance possible. The viscous blob jiggled atop Quinn's hand as he walked towards the chasm. His every step was filled with a sense of anticipation — one more transformation, and this would be done, he thought. He held the blob in between both his hands as he jumped down and stepped down on the floor with a slow grace.

Quinn stood near the apparatus cube and stared at the blob in hand. He injected magic, and it shivered with minute spikes waving on the white

surface. He felt volatile material fluctuating in his hands with a tenacity that fought against his magic, defying his will to change, trying to claw to its original state, resisting the change that was being imposed on it, but in the face of the force as large as the ocean to the rowboat that blob was, it couldn't resist the unconquerable wizardry.

Quinn pulled back his hands apart, leaving the blob to float in the air between the facing palms, trembling and spiking as it flattened into surfaces, curved into arches, and polished into the reflective surfaces while others donned matt qualities. He further concentrated, and tiny air pockets bubbled up inside the in-progress replica — they were irregular globs, defined squares, pointy polyhedrons, among many other things dotting the innards of the now ready to be compared replica.

"Everything has an ending," he said and placed the object that screamed randomness on the cylinder platform with dull clack of stone. He gulped as his eyes moved back and forth between the target of replication and his replica. Did he miss anything? Was there a pesky pocket air pocket inside that passed by his senses? Or was there something entirely different with the last material cube?

The answer was none of them.

Quinn felt a tremble pass beneath his feet. His ears picked up rumble, and his eyes went up towards the ceiling, and a crinkle of dust entered his mouth, causing him to spit out a conjured mouthful of water to clear out the dust.

"Yuck—"

Before the splashes of water off the floor could even settle down, the entire room began shaking violently.

"Oh, for magic's sake," Quinn stumbled backward, landing squarely on the floor, "not this again. Couldn't he have done things differently?!"

The material cubes began shifting out of the walls beside him and trading position right in front of his eyes. A cube just to his side rose above and flew into the sky like an elevator going straight up. A tremble stronger than before struck Quinn, and he found being raised into the air, the cube on which he had fallen had dislodged from the ground and was rising up. After the initial surprise passed, Quinn watched with an incredulous stare or dazed look as dozens of cubes were floating in the air. A cacophony of flying cubes unravelled in front of his eyes, spiking his heartbeat up as cubes crossed by, missing each other by inches, even centimetres from serious collisions.

When things stopped moving and the shaking settled, Quinn finally got himself up and took in the changes that had unfolded in front of him. He was standing on an above-the-ground bridge constructed from a string of cubes going from one end of the room to the other end. Quinn stepped to the edge of the cube and stared down to find the chasm had vanished; in its place was a flat floor, one much deeper than the previous floor. He turned his head to the left and saw the room's entrance at the bridge's end. When he turned right, he found another new thing that interested him the most. It was another doorway opening in the way, one that hadn't been there before.

"The exit. . ."

The sound of his footsteps echoed through the empty room as he walked towards the new doorway. He stopped right in front of the dark doorway and stared deep into the dark tunnel with no end in sight, not knowing where the tunnel led to.

An orb of light swirled upon his palm as he raised his hand forward and faced it towards the tunnel. He curled his finger, sans the index, and touched the orb for it to gently float into the tunnel, with Quinn

watching behind it sedately, his eyes darting everywhere the orb shed its light.

The tunnel finally opened into a room smaller than the second room but bigger than the first one, but like both before, it followed the same theme of drab and dull grey.

Quinn furrowed his brows as his eyes roamed across the room. It was too simple — the first had the center pedestal standing out, and the second had the chasm as an identifying piece, but this was a plain cubic room with no exceptional details. The only point of focus stood directly opposite to him in the form of a door. It was an actual door with a door pane and a handle, though just like everything, it was also entirely made from stone.

There was something wrong here, thought Quinn. He could feel it in his veins. The Architect's a bastard, said a silent voice in the back of his head.

He flicked his hand like throwing a ball up for a glowing-red Emyrean ball appearing spiral in the air before falling into his hand. Quinn narrowed his eyes and threw it like a skipping stone on a lake, and because of the property imbed into the Emyrean, the ball mimicked a skipping stone and skipped across to the other side of the room.

Nothing happened; the room remained as it was before. Would Quinn give up? No. Quinn started to throw objects made from Emyrean all over the room — at the floor, to the walls, over to the ceiling above.

Once again, nothing happened.

Quinn put his hands to the side of his mouth and shouted. "I am going to dig your tomb and robe your grave!" His voice reverberated off the walls, but nothing came in return — no reply filled with vitriol, threatening spells, and/or collapsing walls.

"It seems he is indeed dead. Glad to have that cleared. Cool, now to the difficult part." He looked down on the floor and carefully put his leg a step forward. Nothing happened, so he moved his back leg forward, and yet again, nothing happened.

"Well, two rooms, and he hasn't thrown me into freezing ice, personality-altering curses, water shenanigans, or carnivorous plants," said Quinn. Maybe the Architect wasn't Hitler, he thought.

Screw it, he thought and started to walk normally. And on his third step, a pizza box-sized square in the floor sunk beneath his leg. Quinn looked down, and the first thought that entered his mind was — Pressure Plate. Did it not trigger because the Emyrean ball wasn't heavy enough? Did it work like a landmine? he thought.

Within the span of a single blink, something shot at him from the sunken plate. It collided against an invisible shield spell before it could head Quinn in the head. As the object lost its rising momentum and fell back, Quinn raised his hand and caught it out of the air.

Being careful about not shifting his weight on the pressure plate, Quinn observed the object in hand. It was like around the size of his fingers with the thickness of a pencil, perfectly cylinders with two flat sides on both ends. He tore his eye away from the ammunition for a second and looked at the floor, and as he expected, there was a circular hole in the floor, and if he was thinking right, the circular hole was the top part of a cylinder.

Quinn fiddled with the cylinder for a moment before pocketing it. He looked at the spot one step ahead and planted his back leg onto it, triggering yet another pressure plate while his other leg let off some weight of the previous pressure plate, making it rise.

This time, two cylinders were pelleted towards him. They slammed

against the shield barrier and then floated down into his hands. Quinn pinched one of them between his index finger and thumb and brought it above to his face, and squinted at it. It was roughly the same thing as from the first tile. So did the other one.

He looked down at his feet and saw the two holes. He glanced at one of the cylinders and watched as it fell from his hand and landed on the floor. As it bounced off, the cylinder turned into a blob. Quinn's eyes narrowed. It was transmutation, he thought as the blob contacted the floor and disappeared; it was more like sunk into the stone floor, and in the same instant, a hole filled up.

Quinn licked his lips and stared at the sole remaining cylinder in his hand, cocked his arms, and threw it as far as he could. He kept his eye on the square tile beneath his feet, but his ears were peeled open. The second he heard the sound of the cylinder hitting the floor was the second he saw the second hole fill up.

But then the next second, two cylinders shot up at him again, and Quinn had to jerk his head back to miss them by a breadth of a hair. "Shit! It's on a loop!" he exclaimed, and his eyes widened as he heard two clatters. His mind connected the newly acquired pieces of knowledge and pulled up a shield, and it had barely materialized when another two cylinders came colliding. Quinn watched the shield ripple mere inches away from his face and wondered about the possible double headshot he came close from suffering. The realization made him spring into action. The two cylinders in free fall suddenly came to an abrupt stop and flew spiralling into Quinn's hands, one in each hand, courtesy of summoning spell.

"Okay, okay," Quinn muttered choppily as he clenched his hands tightly around the cylinders. He shuffled his foot aside, just enough to create space for his other leg which he rested on the sunken tile. Both of his feet

were now on the same tile.

"Don't panic," said Quinn to himself, "calm down and think. The solution, yes, it's easy." Quinn waved his hand, and a silver platform appeared in front of him, hovering off the ground. "If I'm not on the ground, I won't trigger a pressure plate. Yes, keep it simple," said Quinn and hopped onto the silver platform. He turned back and grinned to see no sunken tiles meaning no shooting projectiles coming for his head.

"Ye-ah," Quinn smirked, "stupid oldie trying to be smart. Didn't think of this one, eh, did you. Hmph, the Aquatic vault creator is better than you; at least he had the sense to disable brooms. Oh, wait, brooms weren't a thing for a primitive oldie like you, eh, Gragg—"

The smirk drained from Quinn's voice as he heard a familiar voice echo in the room. It was a sound he had so many times in the second room — the sound of when a material cube slid in and out of the wall, the gritting sound of stone against stone. His eyes honed onto the source, and he looked up towards the ceiling to see a square, the same size as the two pressure plate tiles he had stepped on, sunk up into the ceiling.

Something else is coming, he thought.

Thud!

Quinn had just enough time to turn and pull up a shield to see a baseball bat sized cylinder impact on his shield, sending waves of ripple flying across the surface. The hit was nowhere near powerful enough to dent his shield, but it was powerful enough to crack his bones if it hit.

The thought brought up fear in his mind. Fear was good, he thought as Occlumency began taking hold, it would help.

The third room couldn't hear Quinn's thought, and neither did it care for his thought because as Quinn's eyes followed the baseball bat cylinder falling, another tile sunk up in the ceiling.

Quinn heard it and knew another one was coming.

Thud!

Another baseball bat crashed into the shield dome that Quinn had pulled up. Quinn's eye twitched. This second one was stronger than the first one.

Thud!

"What!" Quinn turned to see ripples and just caught a glance of the baseball bat sinking into the ground. Quinn's eyes widened as he recognized what had happened. The force of this baseball bat was lighter, which meant it was from the first ceiling tile. The conclusion: auto loop.

Thud!

Second ceiling tile, thought Quinn, judging from the impact.

He looked up and saw two sunken tiles, and then with his eyes on the ceiling, a third square tile sunk in.

Thud! Thud!

'Third tile. Two projectiles. Stronger than second tile projectile,' thought Quinn as two from third ceiling tile hit him and then immediately two combined from the first two ceiling tiles also made impacts, sending ripples that collided with other ripples, making more ripples on the shield's surface.

'Roughly two seconds,' he thought, 'there's a two-second gap before a new tiles sink in. Every tile remains sunk, meaning that the attacks will stack up with time.' His mind processed the facts he had, and another hypothesis was formed: 'The longer I stay off the ground, the more ceiling tiles would get activated.'

The ceiling tiles had begun sinking when he had stepped off the ground.

'So, if I step down, the ceiling tiles would deactivate,' he thought and then looked up. 'That's three seconds. Time for the fourth one.'

He looked up, and indeed a fourth ceiling tile sunk up.

'I should step down. It would be easier to stay in one spot on the ground—'

Bang!

It came out of a sudden. Quinn, who had been standing firm on the silver platform, was sent flying. As he flew, his body almost parallel to the floor, Quinn's eyes caught, for a brief second, through the rippling still entirely intact shield, what had hit him — the projectile was no longer baseball bat sized, but what he in the situation judged as Luna sized. The size and speed had enough momentum to send Quinn together with his shield — it was like a football being kicked — the ball wouldn't rupture, but it would go flying.

With whatever composure he could muster while being forcibly flung, Quinn cast Arresto Momentum to slow himself down. A blue light covered Quinn's entire body as he visibly slowed down and gyro-ed upright at the exact moment he contacted ground on his feet.

Quinn released a held breath. "That was sudden —."

His words died down in his throat, and he snapped his gaze down — he was standing on a sunken tile. The internal alarms blared, and the emergency message blasted to his body, but before it could act, spikes came out of the ground.

A painful howl pierced the room.

Quinn heaved and grunted in pain as his eyes trembled in and out of focus with the sight of stone spikes penetrating into his leg. From his ankle to his thigh, every part of his leg was pierced. Quinn grimaced as a spike scraped his bone.

He gritted his teeth and let the pain flow freely. It was helping his consciousness.

'Okay, don't take the s-spikes out,' Quinn thought. He had to keep the wounds closed. But he couldn't remain here stuck with the spikes; he

needed to free himself.

'Remember the second floor tile,' he thought. He had the facts clear in his mind. His hand trembled as he made a shaky swing, and the tip of the spikes was lopped off the body of the spike with a smooth slice of transmutation.

'O-Okay,' Quinn breathed out shakily, and his half-lidded eyes moved up to the room's entrance. He had been thrown quite a distance away from the entrance.

Quinn closed his eyes, and he could hear his breathing.

He opened his eyes, and steel shone in the stone greys.

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Quinn West - MC - A thought passed in his mind: This is the norm.

FictionOnlyReader - Author - This is Conflict.

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If you have any ideas regarding the magic you want to see in this fiction or want to offer some ideas regarding the progression. Move onto the DISCORD Server and blast those ideas.

The link is in the bio!

238. Chapter 238: The Stoney

Struggle

If you want to read ahead of the posting schedule then head over to my Patreón.

All the chapters would still be posted here, but you can support me with a donation and get chapters earlier than usual as a bonus.

Link in the Bio/Profile

The sound of his labored breath was all he could hear.

Quinn watched as the bodies of the spikes with splotches and trails of blood retreated back into the floor, leaving behind the tips lodged in his

body, stabbing his legs. A pained moan escaped him as the stone sliced around in his open wound. It was clear to him in his Occlumency-churning mind that he needed to do something about the lodged into his mind before he could do anything else.

'I have time,' he thought. His eyes went to the second floor tile a distance away from him. 'It shot two projectiles at me,' the finger-sized pencil projectiles that he still had in his pocket. And just like every other tile in the room, it was on a loop.

But that was it.

'It's on a loop that starts after both projectiles are replenished. It didn't work with only one. For the projectiles to be reshot, both projectiles needed to be sunk inside the floor.'

In his initial experiment, Quinn had dropped the projectiles into the floor one-by-one, and the fact that the tile didn't shoot after the first Quinn dropped drew his attention.

'All parts of the tile need to go back inside for it to loop,' he had observed, 'even if a single piece stays outside, the tile won't enter the next reiteration.'

Quinn stared at his shaking legs. There was more than a single piece outside the tile. And that's why he had time. As long as he didn't trigger another tile and kept the current tile from resetting, Quinn had all the time in the world.

'At least I hope so,' he thought, staring around the room. Remaining cautious in case there was a penalty for staying still for too long.

The next order of business, as Quinn stared at, it was regaining his mobility. 'Okay, okay, okay, let's go on about it one at a time.' Quinn waved his hand over a piece lodged in his thigh to shrink so that he could smoothly dislodge it, but nothing happened.

Quinn wet his lips and breathed out deeply. 'It's okay, don't get angry, just check it,' he thought to himself. He closed his eyes, and magic flowed into every stone lodged into his body.

'Achemically modified substance.' Quinn groaned. Like the second room, it seemed that this one was also constructed from stone altered to resist magical change. He couldn't shrink it.

His entire face scrunched up, even taking deep breathes wasn't working, and Quinn could feel acid bubble up inside him. Maybe because he had a face and name for the person behind all of this, Quinn felt his emotions spike more than any other vault. He hadn't felt like this since he had almost frozen to death in the Icy vault.

Quinn exhaled once and closed his eyes. His tensed-up face eased, and he got back to the task at hand. Fortunately, Quinn had slogged and slaved diligently in the second room and remembered coming across the same substance. So while he couldn't shrink it, he could transmute it into another shape.

The spike-edge stuck in the middle of his thigh began to wiggle from the center as if someone had melted a block of metal and turned it into liquid. That just without all the incinerating molten heat. Slowly, the stone turned into sludge and began oozing out of his wound, trailing down his leg, taking a route around the other injuries. After a few seconds, the stone had left, leaving an open wound, but that wasn't a problem for a pursuer of healing magic with deep knowledge of blood magic. A green glow covered the wound, and the blood stopped leaking out and instead was diverted into other intact capillaries.

After several minutes, green glows dotted Quinn's leg. His legs trembled, but with a little help of body magic, he remained standing. Quinn stared at a triangular cone covered with dried-up blood. He breathed on it for

the red to evaporate in a hazy mist, after which he pocketed to not ever meet the spikes any time soon.

"Okay, that's that," he said as he stood straight, his face twitching in grimace as he did so. He pushed more juice into body magic, and his expression loosened.

Quinn stared at the room's entrance, and he roamed his gaze everywhere in between. He had no clue of what sort of traps waited for his path.

Quinn glanced up and weighed his choices — the room was big enough that even if he mounted his hoverboard and made a run for it, he wouldn't reach in time — 'Twelve or thirteen seconds. . . . eight seconds was that. What would be two more levels be like?' he thought.

A cinder block of tungsten weighing the same weight as him suddenly dropped from the sky at a distance, sending booming shocks across the room. Quinn kept his eyes peeled on the cinder block but, no projectiles came shooting, no spikes pierced, or any other torturous carriers of death made any appearances.

"The sick bastard built it for living targets," Quinn spat when he saw that the floor beneath the heavy tungsten cinder block was as flat as they came. Quinn sighed. The option of using a decoy so he could make a run for it was out as a viable strategy.

"Alright," he said, taking out a shrunk-down hoverboard, "let's try out my chances." He dropped it on the ground, put one leg on the board, and the very next second used his other leg to push off forward while pumping magic to start the lift off the ground.

One.

Quinn stared at the ceiling as the board sped straight towards the hoverboard.

Two.

Here it comes, he thought. A ceiling tile depressed into the ceiling, but his body went stiff when it wasn't the same tile that had depressed the last time. Quinn jerked his head down as his eyes darted around frantically and what the room presented to him was a barrage of fist-sized cones. Dozens of cones covered Quinn's vision as they collided with his shield, sending ripples all across.

A bitter grin surfaced on his face. His assumption had been incorrect.

"Architect—"

The words never graced the world, but the sound of another tile depressing did. Instinctually Quinn looked down and saw the still hovering, and it was only a beat later he registered what had happened and immediately cut magic, thus landing on the ground.

The punishment for his error was a rotating disc coming for his legs. Fortunately for Quinn, all he needed to do was jump as it went below him, but he was again punished with the reminder that he wasn't in perfect health.

Quinn let out an agonizing yell as he landed on his feet.

But alas, he couldn't stop to rest or lament as even though he was discounted from the ceiling trap, he was once again on the ground. His eyes once again got busy, looking for the next source of distress.

However, it wasn't his eyes but his ears that alerted him of the danger this time.

He looked up, and there was the danger in the form of a square column of whose length he couldn't judge falling right over his head. Quinn raised both hands, and magic soared into the air, wrapping around the stone column. A tremendous weight settled on his magic, and in that moment, Quinn felt like the Greek Titan Atlas with the weight of the sky on his back in the eternal journey to keep it collapsing on the ground to

prevent the union of Uranus and Gaia.

Quinn had lost the will to voice his thoughts. Today was supposed to be a good day for him, with him completing the second room and scouting the third room, which he did, but then everything went south.

He shook his head of the stray thoughts to get back on track. He stared at a step in front of him. There's no telling what it would trigger, and he didn't have the courage to try flyover once again today — that would be for another day for future-Quinn, who he hoped would return with a renewed vigor and motivation — right now, he just wanted to get home. No use of contemplating this, he thought and took a swift first step to the next tile and moved ahead with minimal movement, leaving the overhead column fall. He would have loved to see the column disappear into the floor, but alas, he didn't have the time.

Thud!

Without skipping a beat, an object banged against his shield. Quinn furrowed his brow, switched off his shield, and reached out his hand, and grabbed the thing. Sat in his open palm was a small cube with razor-sharp edges. He felt underwhelmed. He thought it would be yet another pain-inducing ordeal, but it was a nugget. Quinn looked ahead at his path, and there was roughly ten more steps worth of distance left.

". . . Alright then, let's see if it works," he said and took a step forward while pocketing the cube. Once again, another object was shot at him, again he caught it, and once more, it was a cube. The only difference was that it was shot slightly slower; the force wasn't as great as before.

"A pattern?" he asked.

He pocketed another cube and took another step. This time the cube came from just a few feet away from the ground. It was yet again a level slower than before.

"A pattern," he concluded.

Another pocketing and step later, Quinn was holding three spheres, smaller than the cube. Another step got him two spheres. A third consecutive step got him a solitary sphere.

'I'm not in danger,' he thought, daring not to say it aloud, afraid of jinxing it. He didn't jinx it as after five more steps, Quinn stood with three pyramids and four cylinders atop his palm.

Quinn turned back and looked at the room, his gaze weightless. "I'm out," he said.

What felt like days for a weary traveler in a harsh desert were finally over.

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Eddie climbed the stairs, skipping steps along the way, and entered his dorm with a cloud in his step. He walked to his study desk, humming a peppy tune, and shrugged his shoulder to drop his book bag near the desk. He threw his outer robe onto his bed and was shuffling towards the bathroom when he stopped as he came across Quinn laying full starfish on his bed.

"When did you get here?" he asked.

There was a silence before a subdued voice said, "An hour."

"Tough day?"

Quinn grunted in affirmation and then asked, "You sound happy. What happened?"

"Hagrid got canned. The bitch did it in front of fifth-year Gryffindors and Slytherins."

"You happy about that?"

"Hmm? Oh, no, why I'd be happy with Umbitch getting her way. I'm happy because tomorrow Gryffindor and Hufflepuff play to see who's going to play us for the cup."

"Ah, that," his voice trailed.

Eddie walked to Quinn's bed and plopped himself on it. He heard Quinn groan and saw him turn over to face side down on the bed.

"I'm not going tomorrow. Ask Luna," said Quinn, his voice muffled against the bed.

"What's up with you?"

After another spell of silence, Quinn spoke again. "Curse for me, please."

"Huh? What the hell are you talking about?"

"Just spout some profanities. I'm too tired. Curse in my proxy."

"Why?" Eddie asked, and again there was no reply, so he shrugged and started to showcase his exceptional talent in the creative artistry of obscenities.

During what Quinn and Eddie felt was a beautiful string of words, Marcus entered the room and was stumbled mid-stride when the terror of words entered his ears. He watched with incredulous regard as one of his best friends spoke a number of vulgarities ridiculous even for him while he could also see his other best friend lying prone with his face smushed into the bed, raising a limp thumbs up.

"What in the name of everything good are you two doing?" he said.

Eddie stopped and waved his hand. "Did you hear? Hagrid got canned."

Marcus thought he heard a muffle that vaguely sounded like "Got canned" from Quinn.

"Yes, I heard that," Marcus said, walking towards them. "Umbridge dropped by the Muggle Studies classroom." And he had just come back from said class.

Quinn slowly turned his head sideways out of bed. "What happened?" he asked, his eyes half-closed.

Marcus sighed. "She gave Professor Potter an ultimatum. Umbridge said that if Professor Potter continued to teach outside of the formal Ministry-approved curriculum, then she'd be let go. To remain at Hogwarts, she'd have to teach the decades-old books that the Ministry deems as the latest Muggle culture." He could still picture the expressionless features of Lily's face as Umbridge 'sweetly' explained the rules and how that brave appearance had crumbled into a worrisome after.

"That's sad," said Quinn before closing his eyes.

"What's up with him?" Marcus asked Eddie.

Eddie shrugged. "I don't know. He's tired, I guess. I found him like this."

"I've got a feeling Umbridge has only just started being horrible," said Marcus darkly.

"I wouldn't say that," said Eddie, draping a sheet over Quinn, "she's already plenty horrible. She banned Potter from Quidditch. I don't like the bloke, but I won't wish that for even my worst enemies if you know what I mean. However, the bitch got much more horrid bile in her body, so I won't let it past her to pull off something more repulsive."

"You mark my words; she will do something worse. She got her revenge on Dumbledore for appointing a new teacher without consulting her," said Marcus. "Especially another part-human. You saw the look on her face when she saw Firenze . . . she shot back by canning Hagrid and the thing with Professor Potter."

"Bah!" said Eddie. "As long as she leaves Quidditch alone. She can do no worse, and after what Quinn did at the start of the year, she won't be touching it."

"Is Quidditch the only thing in your head?"

"Of course not. I'm a Raven, my fat friend. I have multitudes of thoughts in my mind. Didn't you hear me back then spitting out those lines? That wasn't Quidditch."

Marcus sighed as he switched off the MLEs in the room on his way out of the dorm.

"I'm not fat."

Eddie wrapped his arm over Marcus' shoulders as they stepped down the stair. "You will make the best pillow." And then put his hand on Marcus' belly and made it jiggle repeatedly.

"Oh yeah, that's the good stuff. Let me do it more."

"Stop it!"

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- (Omake: Worries of collector) -

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Turning back the sands of time to the point in history when the First Educational Decree Wave descended onto the publics of Hogwarts.

Ivy Potter dragged her feet above the stairs to her dorm room after a long day of classes and assignments. She entered her room with the thoughts of skipping dinner and going directly to bed, but the drawer of those thoughts was shut closed when she saw Hermione pace up and down in the room.

"What happened?" she asked, dropping the book bag on her desk and lifting a ton of her shoulders. "Why are you pacing around like a trapped ostrich?"

"Did you see the notice board?" said Hermione, still trying to burn foot tracks on the rug.

"Everyone in school saw the notice board, Hermione."

"Educational Decree No. Forty."

"What about it?"

"It says that all items that are not of educational value are banned from Hogwarts!" Hermione said, panicked. "What should I do?!"

"Hermione. . . I don't think you have items that are not of educational value. You don't even own a Chocolate-Frog card."

"But I own this!"

Ivy looked at the thing Hermione slapped onto her hand. "This is an AID card. What about it?"

"AID cards aren't educational items. Knowing Umbridge, she'll definitely get rid of them," said Hermione, her hand on her forehead. "Turn the card around and read what it says."

Ivy turned the card, and to her surprise, a short prose sat on the back instead of a sign that showed if the office was open or close. "The recently passed Educational Decree No. Forty have banned non-educational items. AID cards fall under that category. To protect yourself from possible detentions, it's advised to hide or dispose of the AID cards on your person at your convenience and desire. AID Consultations will not be responsible for any possible harm that may come upon you because of the possession of our non-educational products. May you have a good day. . . so it says" Ivy looked up and shrugged. "It's pretty clear to me. Burn the cards and be done with it."

"No."

"Hermione, Umbridge will —"

"No!"

Ivy stared at her adamant friend, who had finally picked a stationary spot where she stood with her arms crossed.

"I can't let my precious collection turn into worthless dead ash pile.

They're beautifully crafted works of magics that should be preserved,

admired, and studied rather than burned!" Ivy stepped back at the cat's hissing shriek that Hermione's voice sounded like by the end.

"Th. . .Then what do you want to do?"

"We have to get the collection to safety." Hermione's eyes turned fiery as she declared, "Hogwarts is no longer safe." Immediately after, she headed towards the door.

"Where are you going?"

"To secure the safety of my collection."

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"Hermione and Ivy— " "—What can we do for you two today?"

Ivy glanced between the Weasley twins and Hermione, trying to figure why Hermione had come to the two people she usually would absolutely not go to for help.

"I need your help to smuggle something out of Hogwarts. Can you do it?"

The Weasley twins' brows disappeared into their hairlines. They turned to each other, and their faces made expressions as colors on a rainbow.

"Did I hear it correctly, brother mine?"

"I think you did, brother, or we might be dreaming."

Both brothers reached forward and pinched the other.

" "Ouch! It's not a dream!" "

They turned back to Hermione and shifted in their chairs to sit straighter.

"What do you want to be smuggled out?" asked Fred.

"An item of the great importance of me," said Hermione severely. "I'm willing to pay any price for its safe exit and transport to my home."

George leaned forward. "Any price, you say? Like what?"

"I'm willing to turn my eyes away from your activities for an entire

month," said the strictest Prefect in Hogwarts.

" "Three months!" " It became clear to the twins that if Hermione Granger was willing to go such limits, then the item must really be of great importance. So they decided to milk it.

Hermione narrowed her eyes. "Two months," she said, raising two fingers.

" "Deal!" "

Ivy sighed. She couldn't see sense in whatever was going on here. But maybe it was because she was too tired, she thought.

The next day, two figures exited Hogwarts through uncharted routes and delivered three identical packages to a private owl mailing service. Later that day, three non-descript native brown barn owls took flight, with one of them going to Hampstead Garden Suburbs, northwest London.

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Quinn West - MC - Now in sleep mode to recuperate.

Eddie Carmichael - Master of finer arts - Spitting fire.

Marcus Belby - Has a gut - Worried for Professor Potter.

Hermione Granger - Collector - My precious!

Ivy Potter - Confused Friend - Tagging along an operation she doesn't understand.

Weasley Twins - Fred & George | Gred & Forge - Smuggles or goods.

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If you have any ideas regarding the magic you want to see in this fiction or want to offer some ideas regarding the progression. Move onto the DISCORD Server and blast those ideas.

The link is in the synopsis!

239. Chapter 239: Aid In Distress

If you want to read ahead of the posting schedule then head over to my Patreón.

All the chapters would still be posted here, but you can support me with a donation and get chapters earlier than usual as a bonus.

[Link in the Bio/Profile](#)

The timeless ticks of the spread-eagle-silhouette novelty wall clock put together by an eccentric Ravenclaw for the place she worked and learned, desiring to powder the room with her flair to make it her own in small ways.

"The water at the lake was quite foamy today," she said, breaking the soft silence with her dreamy voice. "I fear Yorwel season has come early this year."

The nip of Quinn's pen came to a scribbling stop against an order letter to be sent to his ironmonger for a new batch of metals. He searched, but it was the first time he had heard that. He wondered if he should ask about what a Yorwel was?

"Why're Yorwels foaming up the lake?" he asked.

"When they breed, you see," she said, a faraway look in her eyes. "The male emits a —"

"Ah, I remember now, yes, Yorwels," he amended quickly. That look in her eyes was the harrowing signal that he might be pulled into a rabbit hole that would whisk them both him and her to the deepest dusty corners of the library, scouring untouched bookshelves on what would more likely than not turn into a wild goose chase.

The room yet again lulled into a working reticence as Quinn returned to penning his letter while she on the other side to her flipbook of a bizarre concoction of color eating up the pages. Neither had anything to say nor felt the need to fill out that mundane silence.

And if not for the disorder that came knocking on their door, the silence would have flowed to the end of their today.

Before Quinn could even respond to the knocking, the bell chime rang, and in came Umbridge, strutting. Quinn raised his brows on the account that she even bothered to knock. His gaze went behind Umbridge, where Filch stood hunched on the threshold showing his crooked teeth.

"Madam Umbridge," he said in greeting, not bothering to stand. "What in the grand scheme of things led for you to make your way here to this humble dwelling of service and assistance?"

Umbridge squished her brows together, and her strut collapsed.

Quinn smiled patiently, "What I mean is how can I help with you today?"

Umbridge smiled sweetly but Quinn knew he had been successful when he saw the throbbing vein on her forehead.

"Mr. West," Umbridge said, "to answer your question, I'm here today to present you with a gift from the Ministry."

"A gift?" he asked. McGonagall would forsake Quidditch before he would get a gift from Dolores Umbridge.

"Yes, a gift to help — to assist as you put it — with your journey as a student of Hogwarts."

He wondered why she was beating around the bush, trying to be clever as he could judge. It wasn't a successful attempt, he thought. "What that might be?" he asked.

With a smile glistening with joy from the bottom of her heart, Umbridge took out a rolled-up parchment from her punchy pink purse and handed it to him. "A gift to help you, who has been helping others, to show that there's someone who you can count upon when in need of help."

Quinn held back from rolling his eyes as he unravelled the cord tie. He already had those people in his life, and Dolores Umbridge wasn't them, would never be. But the understanding dawned on him the moment his eyes fell upon the printed contents of the parchment.

Umbridge beamed sadistically at the sight of emotion voiding from Quinn's face, knowing that she had finally got him.

"I had that," Umbridge said, referring to the parchment in Quinn's hand, "made a few weeks ago; it took some time to arrive, but it came through today, so here I am to give you the good news personally."

Quinn continued to stare at the parchment in his hand. He knew that it would come. Knowing her, he was sure it would come, but seeing it in his hands was a feeling different than what he had envisioned and prepared for.

"Quinn?"

He tore his eyes away from the parchment and looked up. "It's okay, Luna," he shook his head comfortingly, seeing the worried look on her face. He handed her the parchment; this concerned her as much as it did for him.

Luna received the parchment and immediately looked at it. Her dreamy, idyllic eyes regained a sharp focus the moment she read the contents.

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EDUCATIONAL DECREE - NO. SEVENTY-SEVEN.

- By Order Of -

The High Inquisitor of Hogwarts

All extracurricular activities are subject to review by the High Inquisitor.

Signed:

Dolores Jane Umbridge

High Inquisitor

- Ministry of Magic -

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It was just a single line, a straightforward sentence, but one that left no doubt about its power.

"Luna, can you please give us some room? I will join you shortly."

Luna looked up at Quinn, her brows drawing together, grabbing a fistful of her cardigan and shirt. Quinn smiled assuredly; it was all he could do right now in the current moment.

She silently got up, a different silence from her usual zoned-out silence.

Luna turned and glared at Umbridge, who didn't even spare her a glance.

She lackadaisically walked to the door, where Filch smiled crookedly at her — to the caretaker, every student was a hateful little runt, no difference. Luna waited for him to get aside, but when he didn't, she roughly shoved him aside with as much force her petite body could muster — to her praise, Filch did flap around his arms to regain his disturbed balance.

"It seems you finally achieved what you failed back then," he said, crossing his hands over his desk. "I assume that you already put AID through the review process, and it was concluded that it failed the review."

Umbridge let out a toe-curling giggle, "As expected of the top student of Hogwarts. And that's exactly why AID failed the review — because of you." Quinn gave her a blank stare, which she took in strides. "We can't have the top student divert their attention and potentially ruin their studies. Especially when you're taking NEWT level courses and at an important junction of your life — didn't I say it before? I'm here to help you."

"Yes, you did," said Quinn and stood up. "I guess it's time to close up."

"Yes, it is," she said with the mirth and gloat flashing on her ruddy complexion. "Argus has come prepared, so all you need to do is hand him the key," at the door, Filch picked up planks of wood, a hammer, and a box of clinking nails from outside of the room, "you can return to retrieve

your personal articles later."

"I had imagined this, but never thought I would do it," Quinn took out his fake wand and swung it once. Like a squid spurting ink in water, an inky black diffused in every corner of the room — the deep brown table turned to ash black, the glass wall took on an obsidian tint, vibrant paintings turned to black slates, healthy green plants turned to healthy dark plants — in seconds, every square inch of the room was colored black.

It was the color of death, a shade common at funerals, which Quinn thought fit the situation.

Quinn draped his robe cloak over his arm and looked at a Umbridge with her eyes darting all around the darkroom. "Shall we go?" he asked. Now that this had happened, he had some work to do and wanted to get it quick.

He didn't wait for a response and began walking towards the door when he felt a hand grip on his bicep, making him stop. He looked at the obvious suspect and asked: "Yes?"

"Before we go. I would like to see what's inside."

Quinn followed Umbridge's gaze and saw that she was looking at the black workshop door. He looked down at the shorter woman, and a few seconds passed in silence.

"No."

Umbridge jerked her back at Quinn, her grip tightening around Quinn's arm. "My apologies, but I might have listened incorrectly. Did you just refuse?"

"Yes," Quinn nodded, "you're not going inside."

"I hope you understand what is happening here, Mr. West, but AID is disbanded. I demand —"

He ripped his hand out of her grasp. "I refuse."

Umbridge's hand slowly rose up to her chest as her eyes turned cold and hard. "I order you to open that door right at this moment."

"As I said before and now will repeat — I refuse," said Quinn flatly.

A deafening silence enveloped the room, and mixing with the black surroundings, it descended into a room one would instinctually avoid.

Umbridge turned her chin up at Quinn, and her lips curled up into a plastic smile, "Detention for you, Mr. West, and this time you aren't getting away."

"Be that as it may be, you're not getting through that door," said Quinn — got her!

Umbridge held her wide from her body, and with her chest thrust out, she walked to the workshop door. She took out her wand and was about to cast an unlocking charm when she saw that there wasn't a lock on the door, just a door handle. She grabbed it and tried to open the door but neither push nor pull conceded her entry.

She turned to Quinn and was about to ask when she saw Quinn's blank stare, and her words died in her mouth. She cleared her throat and stood taller, "We'll just have to come here later and employ a forceful method to enter. I am looking forward to finding what you attempt to hide. I hope it's not something illegal."

She was met with silence.

"Well then," Umbridge turned her wrist to look at her watch, "it's already time," she looked up at Quinn, "we'll be starting your month-long detention today and right now."

Quinn shrugged half-heartedly. If she wanted to give him what he needed, he wasn't going to stop her.

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The west corner of the fifth-floor of Hogwarts was traveled to by students when they wanted to visit the AID office and otherwise remained a part of the castle devoid of people because of no active classroom in the vicinity. This was the reason why Quinn was so elated when Flitwick had assigned him the classroom for the office because he knew if AID was successful, then a part of the castle would be landmarked and defined by AID.

So it surprised Umbridge and even Quinn that not even halfway through the west corner, to see an entire crowd of Hogwarts students clogging the entire hallway — there were uniforms accentuated with blue and bronze, those with red and gold, numerous with yellow and black, and even green and silver.

There were ghosts that flew in the air. Even the chaos-agent Peeves the poltergeist was in attendance — uncharacteristically silent under the dead gaze of the Bloody Baron.

Quinn's eyes caught the group of professors standing at the head of the crowd, and in that group, he saw his head of the house, Filius Flitwick, clutching a familiar parchment in his hands. He immediately understood the reason behind this crowd by seeing Luna (flanked by Eddie and Marcus) standing beside the professors.

It brought a broad smile to his face, which he made no effort to hide — they needed to know that everything was fine, especially those who he taught in secret at least once a week. He did his best to communicate that all was well.

"What is this?" said Umbridge, stepping forward. "Why has this crowd gathered here?"

The big man himself, with his colorful robes and long white beard, stepped forward out from the crowd, "We heard that you disbanded AID. Is it true?" said Dumbledore, asking for the group.

"Yes," said Umbridge, still confused why the entire school was gathered here, "I have decided that AID takes too much of Mr. West's time, thus a risk to his academics."

"Is that so," said Dumbledore glancing at Quinn, who stared back at him, the smile still present on his face. He looked back at Umbridge and spoke, "For four years, this being the fifth, Mr. West has operated AID to great success without ever letting his academics slip. In fact as you as his professor must know that he's the brightest of his age. " He pointed at the mob behind him, "This crowd here has gathered here because Mr. West with his work at AID has touched everyone in some form or another — they have received help at his door, no matter how old they are, no matter what houses they belong to — they have never been turned away. For the students, can you also reconsider your decision and reinstate AID?"

Umbridge breathed a resigned sigh, "I'm moved by this show of unity by the school, but at the same time, I feel pity because the support you have gathered is focused on the wrong person."

The entire crowd muttered in confused discussion at her words. What did she mean by focusing on the wrong person?

Flitwick stamped forward, and his lips curled into thin lines, showing teeth, "What are you trying to say by that Dolores?" his voice screech.

"I'm simply trying to state that when I asked Mr. West to show me what is behind a closed door in his 'office,' he refused to comply with orders of both a professor and High Inquisitor, even after I gave him repeated chances to revert his stance, but alas, it was to no change." She glanced

behind and stared Quinn down, "He must be hiding something that he's afraid of showing me because he realizes that it's wrong and unethical — and that's why I had to make the difficult decision of giving him detention, which pained me a lot because Mr. West indeed is the brightest of the ones I have taught. That is why I hope that the disbandment of AID would set him on the right path. It's for his own good, or so I think as his professor, concerned for his future."

Quinn continued to smile without a change in expression, and everyone saw. It made many wonder if Quinn was indeed hiding something behind that glass wall of his. No one knew (sans a select few) what resided behind it, and his apparent refusal to reveal was indeed a sign of guilt.

"Mr. West," said Flitwick, "let's go right now and see what's behind the wall. It's okay. I won't let anyone take advantage of you so please be fearless and let's make it clear that you have nothing to hide."

Quinn matched eyes with his head of the house. "Thank you, Professor, but I apologize; I'm not willing to share what's in my workshop."

"Mr. West. . ."

But Quinn shook his head. He had already decided. No matter what happened here, he wasn't going to change his position and keep on course.

Dumbledore said, "Mr. West, are you sure about this?"

"Yes, headmaster, I am sure," said Quinn.

Dumbledore sighed, "I see. . . then there's nothing we can do." There was nothing he could do here without Quinn's cooperation — but there was something he couldn't do. He turned to Umbridge. "Professor Umbridge, I wish you luck in your disciplinary actions and hope whatever you find is harmless. . . personal items that Mr. West isn't comfortable sharing. We would be waiting with bated breaths to see whatever you come up with."

Umbridge stiffened, body and all, only momentarily. She regained composure but couldn't stop her smile from twitching. She hadn't missed the message; Dumbledore's intentions were as clear as his half-moon spectacles — by asking her to inform him, Dumbledore had declared that she wasn't going to get any assistance from anyone else (other than Filch) — it wasn't a problem for her, a good blasting curse would get the work done, but it was highly humiliating.

"I shall keep you informed, headmaster," she said, her nostrils flaring.

"Now, I ask that everyone give us space. It's time Mr. West serves his detention."

The crowd parted like Moses dividing the sea, giving a passage for Umbridge and Quinn to pass.

As Quinn passed, he communicated to some people — he smiled calmly at people he knew; winked to Eddie, Marcus, and Luna; nodded to the Golden Squad, and as he passed by the tail of the crowd, he matched eyes with a distraught Daphne, to her, he mouthed, 'I will be fine,' to assure her that all was well.

Umbridge and Quinn were almost out of earshot of the crowd when a loud shout came from somewhere in the ocean of black-robed students.

"Fucking bitch!"

Umbridge's steps faltered in shock, but she acted she didn't hear and continued to walk, and it would have saved her face if not for the fact she couldn't hear snickering coming from just behind her. She consoled her that in a few minutes, she was going to get her revenge.

"We have arrived," Umbridge said, fighting to keep the itch out of her voice. She opened the door to her office and stared at Quinn.

He once again half-heartedly shrugged and walked into the pink and cat exhibit.

Umbridge entered behind him, her eyes shining with a twisted light as she closed the door behind her.

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Quinn West - MC - Smile & Nod.

Dolores Umbridge - Umbitch - Got him finally.

FictionOnlyReader - Author - I hope I wrote this properly

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If you have any ideas regarding the magic you want to see in this fiction or want to offer some ideas regarding the progression. Move onto the DISCORD Server and blast those ideas.

The link is in the synopsis!

240. Chapter 240: The Time of

Quinn & Quill

If you want to read ahead of the posting schedule then head over to my Patreón.

All the chapters would still be posted here, but you can support me with a donation and get chapters earlier than usual as a bonus.

Link in the Bio/Profile

Umbridge's office was as Quinn had seen uncountable times through a screen, every surface draped with lacy clothes and frilly covers. It had the same overwhelming scent of peony flowers that he had to cover his nose away from while on his few visits to the office. The wall that seemed to be Umbridge's foul shrine to kitten decorated plates still made him uncomfortable.

"Please sit down, Mr. West."

Quinn removed his eyes from dead flowers in the vases and casually made his way to the straight-backed chair prepared for him. He sat down and set his hands on the small table draped in fresh lace; he caressed the

pattern of the frills with his digits — trying to feel the history of numerous cutting wounds and trickling blood, wondering if she cleaned the covers or replaced them every time.

Umbridge scampered around the room, preparing the supplies for the detention, getting the giggles while doing it.

"There you go," she placed a stack of parchment on the table and, with trembling hands, gently laid a black quill on top, "we're now ready to start on your disciplinary rehabilitation. From today, we're going to work together and put in the effort to instill in you the qualities of a fine young wizard. Now, you are going to be doing some lines for me. You have the quill and parchment; please start without delay."

She leaned forward, her face above his head, as she whispered in the softest of voices, "I want you to write, 'I will obey Professor Umbridge.'"

Quinn felt her hand brush from his shoulder to shoulder as she passed by towards her own chair across his small table, behind her own full-sized desk.

He lazily shrugged at her intent gaze, barely holding the sparkle within.

He picked up the black quill and asked, "Ink, please" — he had to pretend to be a first-timer.

"It's a special pen, dear," she giggled with a closed mouth, "you won't be needing ink."

"How convenient. . ."

Quinn placed the nib on the parchment, almost tearing the page with its unnatural sharpness, and wrote the first line: I will obey Professor Umbridge.

Umbridge's cheekbones rose at the sight of the red words being inked on the parchment. She leaned forward to get a good look above scalpel cuts that appeared on the back of Quinn's hand. But she felt a strange sense of

discordance at the sight she had enjoyed so many times. Umbridge tried to pinpoint on hit; for a few seconds, it evaded her like a mice evading a cat on its trail, but when the cat finally caught up, the reason became apparent.

He hasn't stopped writing, she thought. Not a single student he had handed the blood quill had even continued to write after the first cut; they had all stopped writing to inspect the sudden injury.

She looked up and abruptly came face to face with dull, bottomless, even dead eyes staring down at her, and even as she was trapped in the stare, Umbridge could hear the pen's nip scribbling against the parchment. She slowly leaned away, but Quinn's gaze remained — directly looking at her without as much as a twitch on his face.

The wound on the back of his hands healed.

I will obey Professor Umbridge.

I will obey Professor Umbridge.

The cuts appeared on Quinn's hand again, but he paid them no attention and continued to look at Umbridge as if he was amid doodling stray scribbles and not bloodletters.

"Mr. West. . ."

"Yes, Professor?"

"Why're you looking at me?"

Quinn tilted his head, "No particular reason. In this room, I find you of the most interest."

". . . I would suggest that you pay attention to your punishment and do it diligently. This isn't for you to find interesting, but to look back on your actions and find and think on your faults."

"I'm taking this seriously," he said and raised the first page of parchment.

"See? I have already completed a page, and I assure you that I'm

diligently retrospectively my actions. Looking at you helps me keep the incident fresh in my mind."

I will obey Professor Umbridge.

"Look down at your parchment, Mr. West."

"I'm sorry if I'm making you uncomfortable." However, he didn't look down and wrote: I will obey Professor Umbridge.

And on it went. Again and again Quinn wrote the words on the parchment, and again and again his hand got cut, healed, and then cut again — rinse and repeat. But in all those long hours, Quinn never looked away from Umbridge even for a second; he continued to singlemindedly stare at her. Somewhere in that time, Umbridge couldn't take Quinn's anymore and looked away. She pretended that Quinn didn't exist and started to grade assignments as if it was any regular after-school today. When darkness fell outside Umbridge's window, she finally broke the silence. "That will be all for today. We will continue tomorrow."

Quinn put down the blood quill on the considerably thinner stack of blank parchment. He took a handkerchief from his pocket and gently wiped the blood trails, dry and fresh — leaving behind a tender yet intact skin. And he did it without looking away from Umbridge.

After that, Quinn stood up and left without saying a word in reply. He walked in the deserted corridors; the sound of his footstep could be heard as he walked by with only the occasional portrait briefly opening their eyes to throw a drowsy glance at him before returning to their shut-eye again.

He felt a slight tug on his trousers, but Quinn showed no reaction to it.

He felt the tug crawl up his leg, then on his shirt, up at his shoulder, and finally, Quinn raised his hand up to see a pink cube with spider legs crawl around his arm's length, making its way to his palm. It did a swivel

on his palm, like a cat would do in its resting place, before retreating its spider-legs and making his palm its new home.

"Good job, little fellow," he smiled. "I think a Potter and a West with a long string of young children would be enough, don't you think?"

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What followed the next day were looks of pity. Wherever Quinn went, he was met by sympathetic head tilts and nods, words of comfort, and all sorts of consolation gifts.

"This is freaking hilarious!" Eddie cackled at Quinn, who held an assortment of chocolates from Zonkos, given to him by a pair of Hufflepuff girls. "Hey, hey, Quinn, listen. . . are you sad that your toy box got taken because you were naughty. Do you want sweets to cheer you up? You have a lot of them waiting for you on your table back in our room!"

Quinn openly stared down, rapidly blinking at the box of chocolates. He was at a loss for words. What sort of brazen gall was this? Had the brains of Hogwarts students melted due to lack of intellectual challenge? They gave him chocolate. Him! Quinn West, The MC, The Master of Chocolates.

He turned his eyes away from the chocolate box to Eddie, who was hunched over with a hand on a wall, wheezing his guts out.

"Oh shut up!" Quinn said and got in response a raised-finger, asking for a minute, in which Eddie proceeded to laugh louder, after which he walked over while wiping a tear.

"I haven't laughed this much in such a long time," he said and patted Quinn's shoulder, "thank you, mate, that made my week."

"Give it a rest. It's not that funny."

"So you do believe it's a little funny."

Quinn clicked his tongue. Today wasn't his day.

"Ah, hey. Quinn, there you are." Quinn turned back to see Tracey and Daphne walking towards them. It was Tracey who had called to him.

"Not you too," said Quinn, "please, no!"

"Huh, what do you mean?" Tracey asked, touching hands touching her face.

And that apparently broke the dam as Eddie started to laugh with his arms holding his sides. In annoyance, Quinn shot a silencing charm at Eddie, which, while stopping the sound of laughter, didn't stop Eddie Carmichael, who started clapping to express the hilarity he was feeling.

"What's wrong with him?" asked Daphne.

"Who knows," said Quinn, crossing his arms, "maybe somebody slipped him a laughter potion as a prank. You guys were looking for me?" he asked at the end.

"Yes," said Tracey, "well, it's not us but Marcus. He sent us to find you and ask if you'd be attending today's party," by which she meant DA meeting, "with your detention with Umbridge and all."

Quinn scratched the back of his head and sighed, "I can't be sure. She kept me till midnight yesterday. Knowing her, she'd do the same again. But please don't let me be the reason for the party's cancellation. You guys enjoy it; I'll see if I can join you." He turned to Daphne, "In my absence, I'll ask that you be the room manager for today."

Daphne nodded, taking the responsibility in stride.

Tracey looked at Quinn and Daphne. She wasn't sure if these two noticed, but they were staring at each other. So Tracey did what a good friend would do and grabbed the still laughing Eddie by the front of her collar.

"I almost forgot!" she said. "I have something to do. Eddie, would you come with me? I need your help. You will, thanks!" She pulled him along, leaving her best friend and best male friend alone.

Daphne broke the silence between them. She asked, "How are you doing? AID has been dear and close to your heart."

"It's a strange feeling knowing that today I won't go to my office," he said, turning progressively pensive, "turn on the lights, cast a scouring charm before casting the spell to turn all AID cards' indicator to show that the office was open, in case someone still have some lying around. That I wouldn't sit in my workshop and do something or give Luna something to do when she comes drifting in. Or that I won't listen to people who would come in with their problem. . ."

Daphne stepped closer to Quinn and grasped his hand. Quinn glanced down at her hand and laced his finger through hers, a small smile working its way to his face.

"Enough about me," Quinn said as they started to slowly walk in their corridors, "let's talk about you. Now that I have some free time, would you like me to tutor you? OWLs are nearing, and if you'd like, we can get together at the library every day — just the two of us."

If the proposition was a beautiful and ornate tiara, then the last part was the crowning jewel on it. Daphne had no reason to think, much less refuse.

"Excellent," Quinn felt that glass was no longer half-empty but half-full with something important, "starting tomorrow, we'll meet every day at the library. Now, tell me, what's the deal with Astoria? This morning she handed me a letter, strangely it only had a cyan solid circle on it, nothing else, not a single letter, just that circle in the middle."

Daphne softly chuckled behind her hand, "She thought you'd be feeling

down and didn't want you to dwell on things, so she made that letter to confuse you — she thought you'd try to find it was and distract yourself."

"Oh my, when did she get so smart? I thought she had somehow picked up Luna's habits. But I guess I do need to thank her for it. Do you think she'd like sweets and chocolates? I actually have an excess and would like to give some out."

They wandered around aimlessly through the corridors of Hogwarts, their hands still intertwined.

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That day passed in a haze of Quinn spending time in his dorm room, doing what he did in his workshop, just in his room. Quinn's second detention started the same way the first one did, except that after two hours, Umbridge couldn't handle Quinn's dull and dim eyes boring dead into her every ticking second away as he wrote sheet after sheet with his blood.

"That's enough for today," she said, glancing at him sideways while keeping her head still, "you can leave. I hope you'd continue to reflect on your actions."

Quinn wordlessly nodded, took out his handkerchief, and slowly and deliberately wiped the blood off the back of his hand, still staring at Umbridge, who leaned away from him. Only after Quinn was done did he stand up from his chair, slowly and noisily tucked it into the small table, and then he walked out, closing the door behind him.

Umbridge sagged in her chair, dabbing her forehead with her pink handkerchief, but then the door opened up, and she froze to see Quinn standing still at the threshold.

"Ye. . . Yes, Mr. West?"

"Do I still have to return tomorrow?"

There was a clogging spell of silence with both staring at each other — one had a mechanic look while the other was looking back as if she had no choice and could only grip her robe behind the cover of her desk.

". . . Yes," she said finally, her forehead wrinkling. She then raised her chin, "you'd be returning here for the rest of the month."

"Understood," and then the door was shut closed.

Outside the room, Quinn was walking away with a lightness in his step.

His attempt at making Umbridge uncomfortable was a success. Other than him, every person who had spent detention with Umbridge had given more or less the same reaction, and those reactions had fuelled the fiendish flames of her sadism. But Quinn had flipped the script and had taken away everything that would allow Umbridge to experience euphoria — he didn't show any expression of discomfort, never stopped because it was painful (irritation for those who took Quinn's potions,) and the constant staring was the accessory that tied the entire attire.

He took out his pocket watch, and it was already around the time the DA meeting was supposed to end. But the group would still be there, he thought and confirmed it by Recon; and thus, he headed to the seventh floor.

Quinn reached the troll painting, and as per the instructions he had given Daphne, he whispered the meetings password to the plain wall for a stone-grey door to grow out in it from the floor below. He pushed forward, and in one step, he went from a deserted-silence to a charged-jabber, though he did cause a stunned dipping-blip only for the gathering raising the bar up again.

"Aww~, " said Astoria, gliding towards him, "you came here to pick us

up? That's so nice of you. You can sit down and wait; we're just about done."

Quinn raised his hands and grasped Astoria's cheek, pushing and pulling them around without a care.

"Whatchu 're chu doin'? Shtovp!" She raised her hands to free her tortured cheeks but was immediately boxed out by Quinn, who continued to make Astoria's head dance.

"Where did the sweet, bubbly girl who I met all those years back go?" he asked, letting go now that he had his fill.

Astoria all but apparated away from him, cupping her face on both sides as she did. "She died with her cheeks!" she spat, tears pooling in her eyes.

"Daphne, he's bullying me!" Astoria yelled.

"Tattler," said Quinn, jabbing.

"Stop it, you two," said Daphne, shaking her head. She turned to Quinn and spoke, "Astoria's right. We are almost done. You shouldn't have come in today."

Quinn shook his head, "It's okay. I'm here actually here for something else." He looked at the group towards a girl with strawberry-blonde hair, "Susan, would you please stay behind. I'd like to talk to you something with you."

Every pair of eyes in the room simultaneously turned to Susan Bones, who suddenly felt that there were roots shooting down from the soles of her feet, digging into the floor. Everyone, including Susan, had the same thought. The last time Quinn had asked someone to stay back, one of those people had stopped coming to DA.

After the meeting ended, and Quinn sent everyone away, including Ivy, who he had to assure that this wasn't related to DA, he faced Susan Bones in the empty room.

"Uhm, may I know what's this about?" she asked.

Quinn calmly smiled and relaxed his body language as he replied, "You don't have to be nervous, Susan. You're not in trouble. So please relax."

Susan perked up as the light in her eyes did a complete change, "Oh, then why. . ."

"Actually, I need your help."

"My help? Sure, what can I do for you?" There was barely anyone in DA who wouldn't help out THE Quinn West; most would be proactive if a situation like this came along.

Quinn reached into his robes and took out an envelope along with a matchbox-sized box wrapped in brown paper and what looked like a tiny ring. "I would like if you'd send these to your aunt," he said.

"Auntie Amelia?" she asked, tilting her head.

"Yes, Amelia Bones," said Quinn, "or to be clear, I want you to send this to Amelia Bones, Head of DMLE."

The curtain of confusion lifted from Susan's eyes almost instantly at Quinn's last few words. She now knew what Quinn was actually doing.

"Quinn, any letter to the Head of DMLE must go through proper channels," Susan said as if reading from a script.

"I'm aware of that," he said, "but if I do that, it will take weeks for my things to reach her desk. But, if you were to send it, it'd reach her desk would reach her desk no later than tomorrow afternoon. This is of importance and needs to reach her as soon as possible."

Susan bit her lip, contemplating what to do. It had been ingrained in her to avoid precisely this sort of thing. She was not to become a channel to get to the Head of DMLE, and that personal and professional lives were different and needed to be kept that way.

"Just this time," she said, "I'll do it just this time, but you have to promise not to let anyone else know about this," because if others knew that she had done it, then it'd open a potential dam of requests in the future.

Quinn smiled and put his hands on his chest, "I assure you that this will stay between us, and if someone asks, you can say that I wanted to talk about Cedric's farewell party that I'm planning."

The next day, before breakfast, Susan went to the Owlery to ready her owl, Sacrum, for flight. She secured the matchbox-sized box and an envelope with her name on it to Sacrum's feet.

She took out the petite ring just big enough for an infant's finger and pulled it for it to snap open from a point. "Put it around the feet," she muttered as she clipped the ring around Sacrum's feet and gasped when she saw the long-eared owl slowly starting to vanish.

Susan hurriedly took Sacrum to the balcony of Owlery and whispered into his ear, "Go to auntie, Sarcum. Fly swiftly," and by the time she let the owl fly, it had vanished from sight, turning the silent flying owl to become completely invisible.

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Quinn West - MC - Can pull dead stares when he wants.

Dolores Umbridge - High Inquisitor - Met a different breed of student.

Susan Bones - DMLE Head's only living relative - Sacrum's hooman.

Daphne Greengrass - RoR Manager (Temp) - Got herself a personal tutor.

Eddie Carmichael - Wheezing and coughing - Hahahahahahahahaha!

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If you have any ideas regarding the magic you want to see in this fiction or want to offer some ideas regarding the progression. Move onto the DISCORD Server and blast those ideas.

The link is in the summary!

241. Chapter 241: Bones, DMLE,

Difference

If you want to read ahead of the posting schedule then head over to my Patreón.

All the chapters would still be posted here, but you can support me with a donation and get chapters earlier than usual as a bonus.

[Link in the Bio/Profile](#)

The Department of Magical Law Enforcement (DMLE), the largest department at the Minister of Magic, and after the Minister's Office, it was without an argument, the single-most-important of the various departments, the only department that could get in the debate was the secretive Department of Mysteries (DOM) — as aside from DOM, every other department was answerable to DMLE.

DMLE held the vital responsibility of functioning as a combination of police and justice facilities — the scope of duties was so vast that DMLE was divided into a vast array of divisions and further sub-divisions. They housed the elusive Auror's Office, the militant Hit Wizard Division, the hectic Improper Use of Magic Office, the clerical division of Wizengamot Administration Services, the connecting bridge in Misuse of Muggle Artefacts Office, and so many others that held their personal territories of responsibilities.

And sitting on top of all that power was the Head of The Department of Magical Law Enforcement — Amelia Susan Bones, the Head of the House of Bones, and the second most influential person in the Ministry of Magic after the Minister himself.

She sat in her office, the prestigious office passed down from one DMLE Head to the next, and a symbol of power in the Ministry — the one who sat in this office exerted influence to every corner of the Ministry and

even to the non-magical world. Amelia, the current holder of the office, was an unusual case as Head of DMLE were usually either Aurors, Hit Wizards or Judges in the Council of Magical Law — Amelia Bones was none of that — she had started her Ministry career in the Wizengamot Administration Services as a clerk at the lowest rung of the ladder and had made her way up to the top of the chain, becoming an outlier in the history of Heads of DMLE.

It was ten in the morning, and Amelia caught up with the events that happened after she went home yesterday through the reports submitted by every facet of her dominion.

Amelia closed the last report of her engaging morning and glanced up at the wall clock to see that she still had a quarter of an hour before she needed to leave for the daily meeting with the Division Heads under her. She didn't have anything else planned into her docket, so she decided to go early to the conference room and maybe stop in a place or two for spot checks.

But as she stood up, her secretary entered the office through the large heavy double doors with a brown-wrapped box held in both hands.

"This came from Susan." The secretary placed the box on her table, and there was an envelope sitting atop the box, and Amelia recognized her niece's penmanship.

The plans to leave early for spot checks flew out of Amelia's mind as her hands went straight for the letter — her dear niece was the only remaining family she had left after the war and was the person she cared for the most. So any letter that came from Susan instantly became a priority for her as this was the only mode of communication Amelia had with Susan.

I should raise a motion in Wizengamot to allow MagiFax in Hogwarts,

Amelia thought as she opened up the envelope.

To her surprise, a smaller envelope slipped out along a letter. Amelia unfolded the letter at it was indeed from Susan, but the penmanship on the smaller letter addressed to her wasn't her niece's.

Madam Amelia Bones,

Head of The Department of Magical Law Enforcement.

Amelia's lips thinned into a line as she narrowed her eyes at the way the unknown writer had addressed.

Did Susan get coerced into sending this? Were Amelia first displeased thoughts as she didn't want people to bother her niece because of her job, but as she read Susan's letter, the contents caught her attention.

"Quinn. . . West?" She looked at the letter and the box. According to Susan, they were from George West's grandson, and the boy stressed that they were of utmost importance and to be opened immediately.

Amelia opened the letter first, curious to see what Quinn West had to say — her first thought was that it was beautifully written, but her eyes widened, and her mouth slackened as she read the words — the first thought had long become an afterthought by the end of the letter.

Is this a joke? Her thoughts scrambling to understand. Her hand hastily went for the accompanying box. She undid the wrapping paper and uncovered a dark mahogany wooden box with no marking on the outside, not even a latch or hinge. She lifted the lid and gasped when she saw a dozen of what she recognized as shrunken-down film reel cases.

". . . It's not a joke? It's real?" She picked up one of the cases, popped them open, and sat inside full-reels. And if the letter was to be trusted, they were proof of the mentioned allegations.

She read the letter a couple of times over just to be sure. The contents of the letter didn't change.

The double doors once again opened, and the secretary peeked inside.

"Boss, it's time for the meeting. Boss?"

Amelia didn't speak for a while, but when she finally did, she said,

"Cancel the meeting — and get me Head Auror Scrimgeour, Captain Auror Robards, and Senior Auror Potter — no, not him, get me Senior Auror Black instead."

'If this is true,' Amelia thought, 'then this is going to be big,' she glanced at the letter, her eyes fixed on Quinn West at the top of the page.

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After a hefty practical lesson of Herbology, gardening in the greenhouses, Quinn walked into the entrance hall, ready to have a good lunch.

I wonder if there will be bacon pie, Quinn thought, his stomach mere clicks away from growling like a crocodile.

"West." Quinn turned at the mention of his name, his thoughts about stuffing his mouth broken by the sight of Draco Malfoy standing in the middle of the hall.

"Malfoy," said Quinn, changing his direction to walk towards Draco, "how's the Junior Inquisitor life suiting you? First the Prefect and then this, you have been doing well this year."

Draco stared at Quinn, and contrary to his expectations, Quinn didn't seem to be down or miserable — he was smiling like a refreshed man.

"Umbridge is going to break down the door in your office today."

Quinn quirked his brow, tilted his head just a smudge, and stared at Draco.

Draco's squished his brows together, "What? Why're you looking at me?"

"I'm surprised with you, Malfoy? Very, very, very surprised."

"Why?"

"Why would you tell me about Umbridge's plan?" Quinn looked around and shook his head, "You don't have your usual friends galore with you, so it's not to gloat, and you don't have the mocking smear on your face that you usually have when picking a fight with the golden boy — so it interests me much for why would you tell me this?"

Draco pursed his lips and stared at Quinn, a muddle of thoughts flashing through his mind. "You could stop it," he said, "a word from your grandfather and Fudge himself would come down to reprimand Professor Umbridge. You could've put her into place the first time she tried to close down AID and give you detention, but you didn't — it's been two days since she closed down AID and gave you detention, but there hasn't been a peep from you." Draco intently watched Quinn, who was still smiling, "Why? I want to know why?"

Draco couldn't comprehend why Quinn, who was constantly on loggerheads with Umbridge, would continue to let the woman try time after time to make it difficult for him. If it was him, he would've written to his father a long time ago. After all, unlike Hogwarts Professors, who were backed by Dumbledore, who the parents couldn't pressure into getting Professors into trouble — Umbridge answered to Fudge, who could easily be pressured by people like their families.

"I'm sixteen this year," said Quinn.

"What?" said Draco, his tone uncertain.

"I'm sixteen this year," repeated Quinn, "next year, I turn seventeen and will be of age, and the year after that, I will have graduated from Hogwarts with what is considered to be the minimum required to be a functioning adult."

Quinn flicked his hand, and an AID card appeared between his fingers. "I

decided to open AID during my first year, sent the request during the summer before my second, and by the time Christmas of that year arrived, AID had been officially established and ready to serve the students of Hogwarts.

Do you know that most of the things in the office that you see today are built by me — I didn't buy a good 70 to 80 percent stuff and instead crafted the tables and chairs I crafted from wood, the glass wall I tempered from stray shards, the plants I grew from seed, the knick-knacks I use for decor, I made them in my spare time."

Quinn paused in thought before shrugging, "Behind the glass wall," Draco's eyes widened, "there's an honest-to-magic workshop where I brew potions, inscribe runes, design my creations, and charm items — even in that room, I have handcrafted half of the stuff, the other half is professional tools like cauldrons, vials, rune tools, among many, and even some of those things, I have modified to my preferences and needs.

"I didn't go to my family and say that I wanted to make something like AID and told them to make things happen. I'm sure if my grandfather tried, I would have a letter from the Board of Governors that I could've used to get started — but I didn't because I wanted to do things on my own. Whatever AID is today is because I worked hard for it to be so."

Quinn sighed. He didn't intend to speak so long, "Don't get me wrong, I've relied plenty on my family's name — there are things in my workshop that a typical middle-class family wouldn't even imagine buying for their children. The Quidditch tournament wouldn't have been so big if my name wasn't West, and Wests weren't what we are today.

"The point I'm trying to make is that I considered myself to be a self-made man. I want to become something because it was me who made it possible and not my family name," he put his hands behind his back, "but

because of the golden spoon I was born, others wouldn't see me that way if I don't go over and beyond."

Quinn came into this world not knowing the reason, but he got something he never thought existed. The day he first used magic and smashed the ball into a wall which bounced back into his face, knocking him into his beg — that day, Quinn had decided that he wanted to be great; he wanted to accomplish something with this new life of his — he was given a gift, and he was going to use it to the limit.

"I am neither an underdog," said Quinn, and Draco scoffed, bringing a smile to Quinn's face, "nor I have the rags-to-riches tag on me. I'm the complete opposite — I'm the star-favorite, and if I want, I can be swimming in a goblin vault of galleons the very next day. The latter I was born into and can't do anything about, don't want to do anything about because frankly having ton load of coin is great — but the star-favorite, I worked that on myself."

Quinn stared deeply at Draco, "Umbridge is nothing but a blip in my journey, someone not worthy to even be mentioned in the footnotes of my memoir. If I can't handle someone like her, then there's no way I will be able to accomplish things I have planned for myself. Going to my family just because I don't like a person is the weakest, most pathetic thing in my book," Draco flinched, recalling the many times he had sent letters back home because of the same reason, hoping that his father would do something.

"I'm here to carve a path of my own," Quinn raised his hand with only one finger pointing up, "someday I WILL be big enough that Quinn won't be known because of West — but West will be known because of Quinn." He pointed at Draco, "So Draco Malfoy, the Heir of Malfoy, do you just want to be that, or you want to be something more, something that will

be just Draco."

Draco felt a tingle crawling over his skin, a heavy feeling in his stomach. Moreover his heartbeat raced. His father, even his mother, would always tell him to be better — to be better than the mudbloods, to be better than the blood traitors, to be better than the Greengrasses and Notts, to be better than the other Slytherins, to be better than someone like Diggory, and most importantly, be better than Potter — but never in their conversation had they said to be better than Quinn West, never had they brought the person standing in front of him into comparison.

Was this why? Draco thought. Because they weren't even thinking on the same level, much less doing things? They both were in the same position — both were of the same age and had influential families with more money than they could spend — yet here was he feeling proud about becoming a part of the Inquisitor Squad, while Quinn didn't even put Umbridge in his eyes.

How could there be such a big difference?

His thoughts were interrupted when he heard Quinn speak while looking over his shoulder. "Oh, it looks like it's about to start," said Quinn.

"Um, what?" Draco turned to see what Quinn was looking at and did a double-take when he saw Amelia Bones, Head of DMLE, with a group of Aurors of whom Sirius Black was a part of, being led by a confused-looking Pomona Sprout.

The group walked straight into the great hall.

"Come on, let's go take a look," said Quinn, "I hope it'll be fun."

Draco, still trying to make sense of things, could do nothing but follow along.

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If not for the fact that she was here on important DMLE business, Amelia would've loved to take a leisurely stroll around Hogwarts, visiting the castle after such a long time. She would've loved to talk to her old Head of House but had to pull on her professional face and ask her to lead them into the great hall. There she would've again loved to sit and talk to her niece, but here she was walking towards the staff table.

"Amelia. . . what brings you here?" asked Dumbledore, getting up from his headmaster's chair as the great hall whispered around them.

She observed the old man; he didn't seem to be surprised at all. It didn't surprise her; this was his school, and — she glanced at Black — there were people in her own team who could've informed him.

"Dumbledore," she said, the sound of saying it without Professor, still sometimes felt strange in her mouth, "we're here for official DMLE business. I hope you'd cooperate with us."

"Of course, whatever you want," said Dumbledore, his eyes twinkling. Amelia nodded and then turned to Scrimgeour. She, after all, wasn't an Auror. But it wasn't bad; she had Head Auror Scrimgeour at her beck-and-call.

Scrimgeour nodded and stepped forward to do his duty. He turned to look at Dumbledore's immediate right and took out his wand.

"Dolores Umbridge, for in suspicion of owning a highly illegal dark item, twenty-nine counts of child endangerment, and twenty-nine counts of child abuse, you're hereby under my authority as the Head Auror placed under arrest. I ask you to surrender your wand willingly, or we will be forced to strip it away from you. Then stand up, with your hands visible, and come around the table to be cuffed."

The great hall exploded. There was so much noise that people with

sensitive years had to cover them to stop the pain. Students and Professors alike stood up from their places and chattered away about what the hell was happening.

But cutting through the noise like nails against blackboards was Umbridge's shrieking shrill voice as she stood up, turning all sorts of red.

"What! How dare you! I will have your head for this! Do you know who you're talking to? I'm the Senior Undersecretary to the Minister, just wait till Cornelius hears about this; you'll be packing by the end of this day —"

"Dolores," Amelia interjected, her face flat, "don't threaten my subordinate. You have no power over him," Umbridge froze. "Now come over peacefully, or I will have you stunned, bound, and wand-stripped in front of the entire Hogwarts," said Amelia, "so what it will be? I have no problem either way."

"Listen here, Bones —"

"Do it," said Amelia cutting off Umbridge.

A red-hot stunner hit Umbridge at Auror-force, knocking the pink toad into her chair, which because of her weight, tipped and tumbled back, falling onto the ground with Umbridge still on it.

Amelia looked unbothered, "There's that. Let's get her cuffed and bound.

Don't wake her up; she'll just scream bloody murder."

Sirius grinned and saluted, "Yes, boss."

Amelia turned to Dumbledore, "I apologize for the commotion. My men and I will clear out as soon as possible. But before we do, can you show us to her office? We need to collect evidence."

"Of course, anything for the Aurors," said Dumbledore, serenely smiling under his beard.

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Draco watched with his face bulging eyes as everything took place so suddenly. One minute he was talking to Quinn; the next watched as Umbridge got a stunner shot to her face.

"Nicely done, don't you think?"

Draco turned to Quinn, who stood with his arms crossed, a smile on his face.

"Looks like Umbridge won't be breaking into my workshop after all."

"You. . . You, don't tell me you did this?" Draco asked, stammering.

Quinn looked at him and smiled, "She might just be a blip, but she overstepped her insignificant blip bounds, so she had to go." Quinn patted Draco on the shoulder, "This is what just Quinn can do. There was never a need to get West involved. Let's get closer. I want to see if I can get a picture; it'll sell amazingly, I think."

Draco watched with head spinning with too many thoughts as Quinn strutted into the great hall.

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Quinn West - MC - Booyakasha!

Amelia Bones - Head of DMLE - Yeah-yeah, let's get it moving.

Draco Malfoy - Shocked - What the hell?!

Albus Dumbledore - Headmaster - Sure, whatever you want.

FictionOnlyReader - Author - That middle scene kind-off stretched.

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If you have any ideas regarding the magic you want to see in this fiction or want to offer some ideas regarding the progression. Move onto the DISCORD Server and blast those ideas.

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242. Chapter 242: Tough

## Temptation Turmoil

If you want to read ahead of the posting schedule then head over to my Patreón.

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A small kindling of green flames burned on a dark stone floor.

Strangely there was no wood feeding the fire, nor was there any sort of propellant spilled on the floor that could be lit to burn a fire with a dim green.

All of a sudden, the green fire roared, its flame reaching above and beyond, turning the dim kindling bloomed into a voluminous blaze of illuminating green. Out of the wisps came the figure of Quinn, the tongue of green licking his body as he walked out of the fireplace. He looked back as the blazing fire soothed back to a calm kindling, but the next second, anger overtook the flames, and this time, it was the tall figure of Albus Dumbledore in all his bearded glory that walked out.

Dumbledore took out the death stick from his pocket as he asked, "I suppose you have been here before, Mr. West." He waved the wand, and all the soot and dust cleared from his clothes, beard, and glasses.

"On the contrary, headmaster. I haven't been here before."

"That's surprising to hear. May I?" Dumbledore asked, gesturing at his wand. Quinn nodded, and with a twirl from Dumbledore, Quinn was rid of all the floo-soot.

"It's surprising to me as well, but this is indeed my first time here," said Quinn taking in the new surroundings.

They stood at one end of a very long and splendid hall with a highly polished, dark wood floor. The peacock-blue ceiling was inlaid with

gleaming golden symbols that were continually moving and changing like some enormous heavenly notice board. The walls on each side were paneled in shiny dark wood and had many gilded fireplaces set into them. Every few seconds a man or woman would emerge from one of the left-hand fireplaces with a soft whoosh; on the right-hand side, short queues of people were forming before each fireplace, waiting to depart. Halfway down the hall was a fountain. A group of golden statues, larger than life-size, stood in the middle of a circular pool. The tallest of them all was a noble-looking wizard with his wand pointing straight up in the air. Grouped around him were a beautiful human woman, a centaur, a goblin, and a house-elf. The last three were all looking adoringly up at the man and woman (both dressed in robes). Glittering jets of water were flying from the ends of the two wands, the point of the centaur's arrow, the tip of the goblin's hat, and each of the house-elf's ears, so that the tinkling hiss of falling water was added to the pops and cracks of Apparators and the clatter of footsteps as hundreds of witches and wizards, most of whom were wearing glum, early-morning looks, strode toward a set of golden gates at the far end of the hall.

"Let me guide you then," said Dumbledore.

They joined the throng, wending their way between the Ministry workers, some of whom were carrying tottering piles of parchment, others battered briefcases; still others reading the Daily Prophet as they walked. As they passed the fountain, Quinn saw silver Sickles and bronze Knuts glinting up at him from the bottom of the pool. A small, smudged sign beside it read:

All proceeds from the Fountain of Magical Brethren will be given to St. Mungo's Hospital for Magical Maladies and Injuries.

Quinn retrieved a gold galleon and flicked it into the fountain. The coin

arched in the air before splashing into the water, after which it slowly sunk down, soon joining its lower-valued brethren waiting to be collected for their eventual noble purpose.

Dumbledore led him out of the stream of Ministry employees heading for the golden gates, toward a desk on the left, over which hung a sign saying SECURITY. A poorly shaven man in peacock-blue robes sat behind the desk, reading his Daily Prophet.

Quinn and Dumbledore stood before the desk for the man to notice them, but he was too engrossed in whatever he was reading in the newspaper.

Quinn looked at Dumbledore and then gestured with his chin back towards the stream of people going in and out of the golden gates;

Dumbledore chuckled but shook his head. Dumbledore reached his hand and ringed the table-bell, which succeeded in getting the man's attention. He looked up from his newspaper to see them standing there, and his eye bulged out so much that Quinn worried that they might pop out.

"D-Dumbledore!" The man hastily stood up, knocking his chair to the ground.

"We are here to attend a hearing," said Dumbledore. "Albus Dumbledore, escorting and Quinn West, a prosecutor witness."

"Y-Yes," said the security guard and tapped his wand on the top of a metal box on a table behind him for the box to shoot two silver badges out of its metal chute. The guard handed them the badges and asked them to put them on.

Quinn looked at his badge: Quinn West, Criminal Trial Witness. He pinned it on the lapel of his suit. Dumbledore did the same, pinning his badge on his less-than-usual colorful robes.

"Please step over here," said the security guard.

Dumbledore walked closer to him, and the wizard held up a long golden

rod, thin and flexible as a short whip, and passed it up and down

Dumbledore's front and back.

"Wand please," said the guard at Dumbledore, gulping at having to ask THE Albus Dumbledore for his wand. If it was before this year, the guard wouldn't have even dreamt of asking the Chief Warlock Dumbledore for his wand, but today Dumbledore was a mere visitor with no part in Ministry, and visitors were required to submit to a search and present your wand for registration at the security desk.

Quinn watched as Dumbledore handed over the death stick to the random guard, who put it onto a strange brass instrument, which looked something like a set of scales with only one dish. It began to vibrate. A narrow strip of parchment came speeding out of a slit in the base. The guard tore this off and read the writing upon it.

"Fifteen inches, elder wood, threstal tail-hair core — er, age in use. . . unknown."

Dumbledore simply smiled and asked for his wand back. The guard hastily placed the death stick onto Dumbledore's palm and then turned to Quinn to put Dumbledore's wand's nerve-racking check behind him.

Quinn took a silent breath as his hand pushed aside his suit-jacked aside to reveal a wand shoulder-holster with his real wand hanging by his side at the mid-point of his torso.

While this was indeed Quinn's first time at the Ministry of Magic, he wasn't clueless about the check-in procedure for visitors. If he was coming here alone, Quinn simply would have brought his fake wand along and confuded the guard to get past the registration, but that wasn't an option with Dumbledore looking over his shoulder. So after years of confinement in his briefcase, Quinn undid the layers of wards and seals placed outside and inside the storage of his wand to retrieve it for this

occasion.

He gripped the wand and the charmed holster loosened around the wand's length, allowing Quinn to pull it out.

It was instantaneous.

The prickling feeling of his wand being just under his arm was tempting enough for Quinn, but to have his fingers wrapped around it was another level of torture that Quinn was not a fan of.

Occlumency didn't help. By no fault of his own, his magic being reached out to the call whispered by the wand was almost seductive. Quinn could practically taste the power, see the realm of possibilities that would open up for him, and once again was reminded of why he stayed away — his will wasn't strong enough to keep him from succumbing to the tantalizing enticements.

He breathed a silent, shuddering breath as the wand left his hand.

"Fourteen inches, acacia wood, phoenix-feather core, been in use for five years. That correct?"

"Yes," said Quinn, barely able to raise his wand above a whisper, his eyes stuck to the wand.

"I keep this," said the guard, impaling the slip of parchment on a small brass spike. "You get this back," he added, thrusting the wand at Quinn.

"Thank you," Quinn stiffly nodded and put the wand back in the holster with great difficulty.

"Thank you," said Dumbledore, he looked at the employee name tag,

"Eric."

Off they were again into the stream of people passing through the golden doors. Jostled slightly by the crowd, Quinn followed Dumbledore through the gates into the smaller hall beyond, where at least twenty lifts (elevators) stood behind wrought golden grilles. Dumbledore and Quinn

stood behind wrought golden grills.

With a great jangling and clattering, a lift descended in front of them; the golden grille slid back, and both moved inside it with the rest of the crowd. Quinn found himself jammed against the back wall of the lift. The grilles slid shut with a crash, and the lift (elevator) ascended slowly, chains rattling all the while, while a cool female voice rang out on every floor they stopped.

After several levels of stops, only Quinn and Dumbledore remained in the lift. When the door once again opened, the lift (elevator) voice spoke again,

"Level two, Department of Magical Law Enforcement, including the Improper Use of Magic Office, Auror Headquarters, and Wizengamot Administration Services."

"This is us, Mr. West," said Dumbledore, and both stepped out into a corridor lined with doors.

Dumbledore led him through a couple of corridors before stopping in front of a heavy oak door. He turned to Quinn and said, "This is the waiting room arranged for you. Make yourself comfortable in there as I go and inform the Auror Office of your arrival. When it's time, I'll come to fetch you."

Quinn nodded and turned to the door as Dumbledore walked away. He looked down on his clothes — with a look, his suit straightened, the tie-clip momentarily loosened for the tie to adjust itself — but the very moment he did it, Quinn winced, using magic with his real wand so close to him, literally below his arm, wasn't a good idea.

He pushed open the door and entered the room to see a man sitting on a side of a large U-shaped sofa (couch) set, reading a magazine that he must have picked up from the stack present on the table square low-table

present in the center-well of the sofa set.

The man looked up from his magazine and stared at Quinn with his stone-grey eyes, "So you have arrived, good morning."

Quinn closed the door behind and nodded, "Dumbledore dropped me off."

He walked to the sofa set and sat himself down beside the man.

"How have you been," said Quinn, "grandfather."

George West submitted the magazine back to the stack. "I am well, thank you. But imagine my shock when I get a letter from my grandson that he has been named a witness in a criminal case and not any witness, but a prosecutor's primary witness." He turned to face Quinn, "At least the last time you got in trouble outside Hogwarts, but this time you managed to get somehow get into this while staying firmly inside Hogwarts."

"It's not my fault," said Quinn, defiantly, "she closed my business. I had to do something."

"From what I've heard, you gave them months' worth of tapes." George West had his word to get information on confidential evidence.

"She tried it once before, so I had to prepare something in case she tried again. The detention footage was just an opportunity to nail her when she tried to do something stupid."

"This blood quill. . . that the woman used — she used it on you, was it painful?"

Quinn nudged George's shoulder with his own and smiled, "Of course not, I never felt any pain from them. I had prepared for the possibility months before."

George searched Quinn's face for the truth before turning away.

"Your sister wasn't happy with when she heard about this; she wanted to Portkey here and make sure that the Umbridge woman doesn't see daylight ever again."

Quinn chuckled. "I got pages with expletive words sprinkled in almost every paragraph. She really blew up like an exploding snap. Thank the business, she's not here, and I return to Hogwarts in a couple of hours. I'll talk to her when the dust settles."

". . . You can come to me anytime, you know that, right?" George said, silently commenting on Quinn's choices.

"That wasn't ever a question in my mind," said Quinn, "why won't I come to my own family when I'm out of my depth."

George nodded. "Anything else you'd like to tell me?" he asked.

"Hmm. . . well, I have been, how should I say this, well. . . courting, as someone of your age would say — I have been courting Daphne Greengrass. In short, I'm dating Daphne Greengrass."

"Oh," said George, "Oh, is that so. . . well, I hope everything's going jolly, I suppose — dating as they say these days."

"Yes, everything's going well."

". . ."

". . ."

The grandfather-grandson duo had breached this subject a couple of times before, but now that had indeed happened, neither knew how to continue.

The waiting room door opened, and a man dressed impeccably in a black two-piece suit, white shirt, and black tie came inside.

"Mr. West, the trial's about to start," said the man before looking at Quinn and nodding.

Quinn stared at the man for a moment before recognition struck him.

"You're Lucas Norgaard," said Quinn, "from Limax Group."

The now-identified Lucas, along with Aksel Thorn and Neil Agard, was one of the three founding members of the Limax Group, the West-owned

private security group, or to put it simply, a magical-mercenary group.

"I'm surprised you remember me," said Lucas, "we only met for less than an hour when you visited Denmark."

Quinn stood up and shook Lucas' hand. "I have an excellent memory. I suppose you're here as grandfather's bodyguard?"

"Indeed, I've taken on Mr. West's detail as the point of his personal security." It was tradition for the three founders to spend some time with George every year — so every year, one of them would spend a month in George's personal security detail. It not only helped them keep a solid connection with George, but they were able to meet other people and get new clients and contracts — George West, after all, sat around with many high-profile individuals.

"Then, I'll see you after the trial, Quinn," George said as he got up, "and remember that you don't have to answer any question you don't like; keep your calm, and you'll be fine. I'll be watching, so no need to be nervous."

After that, Quinn was left alone in the waiting room.

A silence descended over the room.

He waited for half a minute before he hastily stood up, all but ripped his suit-jacket off him, and removed the shoulder-wand-holster of his body.

He picked up his suit-jacket, removed an expanded pocket that he stuck to the inside of his suit-jacket this morning, and stuffed the wand holster inside the pocket.

Only after doing that did Quinn take a breath of relief as he slowly paced up and down the room. After he felt the worked-up energy calm down, Quinn sat opposite his suit-jacket, his elbows resting on his knees as his entire body slouched forward, his eyes focused on the ground, away from the suit-jacket.

Leaving him alone in a room with his real wand was a bad idea; no one knew it better than himself. He wasn't used to this; he never was. The reaction that a magical focus perfectly attuned to himself brought out of him was the reason Quinn had locked his real wand away.

After years of not experiencing the feeling, Quinn was reminded of how it felt. His memories didn't do the real thing justice, and it wasn't even close.

The problematic part was that Quinn didn't know what to do about it. Getting rid of it wasn't an option, Quinn thought, not with what was brewing on the horizon.

The door once again opened.

"Mr. West, it's time. The barrister has started to present the evidence. . . .

Mr. West, are you alright?" said Dumbledore, seeing Quinn with his head down, his suit-jacket thrown messily on the sofa.

Quinn didn't answer. He got up and walked to the other side of the sofa, picked up the suit-jacket, put it on, and smoothed out the creases.

Dumbledore watched as Quinn turned towards him with his eyes closed before taking a deep breath and opening his eyes. The usual smile appeared on Quinn's face as he said,

"Let's go, headmaster. It's time to bury a toad."

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Quinn West - MC - Opportunity may knock once, but temptation leans on the doorbell.

Albus Dumbledore - Headmaster - Also a witness for the trial.

George West - Grandfather - Short cameo. May make one next time as well.

Lucas Norgaard - Limax Group - I made a brief appearance in Chapter 125.

FictionOnlyReader - Author - Hmm, this chapter sort of jumped at me,  
and I couldn't ignore it.

.

Also, please don't confuse this with Sin-Quinn. He doesn't fear that if he picks up the wand, he will go haywire and start shooting spells without care.

No. Quinn fears that if he picks up the wand, he will get the taste of the good stuff, and won't be able to put it down ever again.

Is he right in his fears? Maybe, or maybe not. He might be right and his wandless progress take a hit if he picks up the crutch, or maybe it's all a thing in his head, and nothing will actually happen.

Only time will tell.

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If you have any ideas regarding the magic you want to see in this fiction or want to offer some ideas regarding the progression. Move onto the DISCORD Server and blast those ideas.

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243. Chapter 243: Trial of

DoloresUmbridge 1

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The courtroom was dimly lit.

There were no windows, merely torches in the brackets, lighting the room in an ominous glow. Empty benches rose along the walls of the room, but ahead were many shadowy figures in the highest benches of all. They had been talking in low voices, but as the heavy door swung

open and Dolores Umbridge entered the courtroom with two Aurors flanking her, the room fell into silence.

A callous male voice rang across the courtroom.

"The accused, Dolores Umbridge, has arrived."

"Cornelius!" Umbridge broke forward towards a section of the benches, looking up at the Fudge, who currently had a complicated expression on his face. "You have to stop this, Cornelius. These imbeciles have got it wrong —"

The thick unchained manacles around Umbridge's wrists forcefully drew her hands towards her back, where little clasps locked together to restrain Umbridge's hands together. The escorting Aurors grabbed Umbridge by the shoulders and dragged her into the chair in the middle of the room while Umbridge cried indignantly. Metal chains rose from the feet of the stone chair and wrapped her arms to the armrests.

"The accused will maintain decorum, or she will be found in contempt of the court."

Umbridge, however, didn't seem to be listening. She desperately wanted to speak with Fudge; he hadn't visited at all since she had been arrested.

"Cornelius! Please tell them that I did no wrong! I was simply following the Ministry's will —"

"Silence!"

The Aurors took the thunderous shout as orders and muted Umbridge with strong silencing spells. Umbridge continued to shout, but all she could do was move her mouth and emote through her red face.

The fifty people in the courtroom, wearing plum-colored robes with an elaborately worked silver W on the left-hand side of the chest and all staring down their noses at Umbridge, some with very austere expressions, others look of clear disgust, while there were looked on with

rosy faces and bemused smiles.

Behind Umbridge, where she couldn't see, sat the audience to the trial, those who were part of the Court of Wizengamot — the Trial of Dolores Umbridge, while wildly popular, wasn't open to the public or media, the Ministry had locked down the trial because of the sensitive nature — only those with certain standing could attend, people like George West. In the middle of the front row of the Wizengamot benches, behind a podium, sat Lawrence Owler, an old judge, who had long retired from politics but had been called to take the temporary position of Chief Warlock — Fudge, who had occupied the position after Dumbledore, had to vacate because of the accused being someone from his party.

Owler stared down at Umbridge, his brows furled; she had disobeyed his order of maintaining decorum. "Very well," he said. "The accused being silenced — forcefully — let us begin."

"Criminal Hearing of the fifteenth of March," said Owler in a ringing voice, and the Court Scribe sitting bottom row began taking notes at once, "into the offense committed by Dolores Jane Umbridge, Senior Undersecretary to the Minister for Magic. . . in sabbatical and working as the Defense Against The Dark Arts Professor at Hogwarts, along with the Ministerial position of High Inquisitor.

"Today, I, Lawrence Owler, will be the judge presiding over this case. The Prosecution Barrister and Defense Barrister will present their cases along with the evidence to support their claim." He looked at the people sitting by his sides, "Members of the Wizengamot Jury, it's for you to decide if the presented evidence you're going to hear today proves the defendant's guilt. I also inform them that it's their job to consider the evidence and not the law. I'm the judge; I'll be in charge of ensuring that the trial proceeds lawfully and, if needed, will guide you all on the finer points of

the court's law." Oowler turned to the front and finished, "We may now begin."

In the well of the courtroom, two tables sat on either side and a few paces back from the Umbridge's chair.

From the left rose a man dressed in black barrister robes. "Sirius Black, Auror's Office, from Prosecution."

From the right table rose another man also similarly dressed. "Jones Spindlewheel — Spindlewell & Rubis, for Defense."

Oowler nodded and then looked at Umbridge. "Ms. Umbridge, I'm going to read you your charges, and after I do so, you'd be allowed to speak again, but if you again disrespect the court, I'll send you to Azkaban for your offense here even if you're found not-guilty on your charges. If you understand, please nod once."

Umbridge nodded, but her eyes were glaring daggers at Oowler.

". . . Very well, the Scribe may note that Ms. Umbridge has given her affirmation," said Oowler and then read her the charges. "You're accused of possessing an illegal dark magic item — twenty-nine counts of child endangerment — and twenty-nine counts of child abuse. Please tell the court if you're aware of these charges with a simple yes or no."

The Aurors pulled of the silencing charm, freeing Umbridge to speak with a tone slicing with acid, 'Yes, I'm aware!'"

Oowler didn't care for the tone and blandly continued, "As this is a Wizengamot Court, the court of the highest order, there's no need to pass it along the upper chain. We will be moving along; I ask the Prosecution to start with the opening statement."

Sirius Black stood up and began, "Your Worship and the members of Jury, as the charges indicate, we the Prosecution from the Auror's Office have arrested Dolores Umbridge because of her heinous crimes that you

must know about from the indictment of the charges provided to you.

Dolores Umbridge, on the thirteenth of March, was arrested from the Hogwarts' great hall because the Aurors Office had found out that she had been torturing the dear and bright young children, abusing her power as both a Professor and the High Inquisitor — she, who's supposed to ensure that our children are safe was instead harming them."

The Jury murmured as they peered down below at Umbridge, who looked like she wanted to bite someone's head off.

"To get a clearer picture of what happened on the day of the arrest, I'd like to call upon our first witness to the stand," said Sirius and turned to the usher. "If you'd call in Head of DMLE, Madam Amelia Susan Bones." After a moment, Amelia Bones, a stern woman wearing a monocle and a suit, came into the courtroom and took the stand.

"Madam Bones," started Sirius, after Amelia took the oath of truth, "if you'd describe on how the Aurors Office came to arrest Dolores Umbridge and press charges against her."

"On the morning of the thirteenth, I received a package that contained dozens of film reels and a letter drawing my attention to what was on the film reels. According to the letter, Dolores Umbridge had been torturing students in the name of detention, and that many students had fallen prey to her malicious activities, and that she needed to be stopped."

"I see; what did you do after reading this letter?"

"I called upon Head Auror Scrimgeour, Captain Auror Robard, and you — Senior Auror Black into my office because of the graveness of the situation."

"What did you and your team do after?"

"We watched the reels using a projector in a conference room."

"What did the reels show?"

"The reels confirmed the letter's contents," Amelia raised her hand to touch her monocle. "The reels showed Dolores Umbridge handing the children in detention a quill and telling them to write lines. When the children wrote using the quill, the upper part of their hands was cut open, and the quill used the children's blood as ink." Amelia looked at Umbridge, "She made those pitiful children write for hours, cutting their hands for hours, drawing their blood for hours, and they didn't have any means to refuse, leaving them scared and scarred."

Sirius turned to the Owlery and said, "Your Worship, the Prosecution would like to play the mentioned reels for the Jury."

"Permission granted."

A projector was set up and loaded with the first reel in the series provided to the Aurors Office. The projector projected the footage, not on a screen but in the air, as a hologram.

The Jury and the audience gasped when the reel showed Harry Potter writing with a quill as it cut open his hand and drew blood. Everyone watched with wide-eyed horror at Umbridge's gleeful smile, and she spoke to Harry, which was all audible because the footage was recorded on a sound-film that not only stored video but also audio.

"Member of the Jury, as you can see, this is the reason why the Auror Office decided to Prosecute Ms. Umbridge," said Sirius, pleased with himself for choosing Harry's detention footage. "She did this to twenty-eight other children, who went through the same torture, and every child did it not for a day but for a week, some even going as far to write with the pen for two weeks."

He turned to Amelia and smiled, "Thank you, Madam Bones. I'm done with my questioning, but please remain stated, my friend from the Defense would like to ask you some questions."

Spindlewheel stood up from his chair and faced Amelia. "Madam Bones, may I ask you to tell the Jury how you got these tapes?"

"I was sent them by a Hogwarts student named Susan Bones."

"Susan Bones is your niece, correct?"

"Yes, she's my niece."

"How did she procure these reels?" Spindlewheel asked and then turned to the Jury, "We have already received permission from Ms. Susan Bones that her aunt Amelia Bones is to state her account. We have a written statement to match it. My friend, Sirius Black doesn't have any complaints about this."

Sirius got up and nodded, "I confirm that the Prosecution doesn't have any objections to this."

"Susan received these tapes from another student and, seeing that I'm the Head of DMLE, was asked by him to deliver them to me," said Amelia as a proxy.

"Do your niece always send you crucial evidence for cases?"

Sirus immediately stood up. "Objection! Your Worship, this line of questioning isn't relevant to the case," he said heatedly.

Owler nodded, "Sustained. Mr. Spindlewheel, please keep the line of questioning to the point and relevant to this case."

"My apologies, Your Worship," said Spindlewheel and turned back to Amelia. "Madam Bones, when did you decide to go arrest Ms. Umbridge? You and your team go out crusading to Hogwarts the second you saw the reels, didn't you?"

"False," said Amelia, plainly, "before any action from the Aurors Office, the reels were sent to be analyzed to verify their authenticity and that they weren't some fabrication to falsely accuse Ms. Umbridge of a crime she might not have committed."

"And what did the forensic analyst say about the tapes?"

Amelia shook her head, "That's not my place to say and would be hearsay to give the forensic analyst's account. I can, however, tell you the results of the report submitted to me."

Spindlewheel narrowed his eyes while Amelia looked up at him, confidence shining behind her monocle. She wasn't going to fall into his trap. A witness was only allowed to present their side of the account, and saying others' accounts was hearsay and, if done repeatedly, could be a blow to the witness' credibility as it became unclear if they were telling their or someone else's account.

"I see," said Spindlewheel, "then what did you do after —"

Owler cut off Spindlewheel and spoke to Amelia, "For the better understanding of the Jury, would you please state the results of the forensic report."

"Yes, Your Worship," said Amelia and then turned to the Jury she'd be otherwise a part of, "the result proved conclusively that the footage recorded on the reels was one hundred percent authentic without any signs of magical alterations or fabrication."

"Thank you," said Owler, jotting down his personal notes, "please continue."

Spindlewheel silently sighed; he didn't want the Jury to directly hear that the tapes were genuine articles. But there was no use of dwelling on such things; he had to move along.

"Madam Bones, it surprises me that you personally went out to arrest Ms. Umbridge. I didn't know that Head of DMLE had started to take part in arrests," he asked.

"The case was serious enough that I decided to go along for this particular one, said Amelia, but her voice softened as she continued, "I

also wanted to make sure that my niece was alright. . . she hadn't written if she had been part of those detentions, and I couldn't watch hours worth of footage. . . the aunt part of me couldn't sit still, I had to see my daughter." (yes, she said daughter)

Spindlewheel narrowed eyes, glanced at Jury, and spotted some nods and approving whispers. He looked back at Amelia, and there was a smile in her eyes. Damn it!

"Thank you, Madam Bones," he said, "that'd be all from my side as well."

She needed to go before the Jury began to tilt towards the Prosecution.

Amelia got up, bowed to Owler and the Jury before leaving.

Sirius got up from his chair, poker-faced, but inside, he was doing backflips. "Your Worship, next we'd like to call upon Captain Auror Gawain Robards to the stand to tell his account of the arrest."

Captain Auror Gawain Robards, a stern, square-jawed man with a gait of confidence and discipline, took the stand, bowing to Owler and Jury, sworn to say the truth, before turning to Sirius.

"Captain, would you please tell us about your investigation of Ms.

Umbridge's office at Hogwarts?"

"Yes, we went to the scene of the tapes right after we detained Dolores Umbridge; we were primarily looking for the quill seen in the footage.

After some searching, we not only found the quill but also many more, all used, bloodstains still present."

Another round of gasps and chattering fired up in the courtroom as all looked Umbridge, who had fixed her sight straight ahead, looking into the distance.

"What did you do with them?" asked Sirius, after Owler silenced the rowdy crowd.

"We bagged-tagged them—"

Robards was cut-off by Owler, "Captain Robards, please don't use we in your testimony, give only your own account, and please refrain from using jargons."

Robards nodded with a set jaw. It had been a while since he had to speak in court; his days as the lead-Auror on cases were past him; these days, he mostly did supervising duties.

"Captain, who do you mean by when you say we?" asked Sirius; it was an excellent Prosecutors job to ease the witnesses' time in the court.

"That would be myself, you — Senior Auror Black, and Junior Aurors Shinkers and Reed — us four went into Dolores Umbridge's office to secure evidence for later analysis."

"I see, as the lead-Auror on this case, you're aware of the blood reports on the quills you found?"

"Yes, I do."

"Mind telling what these reports stated."

"After we saw the footage and identified the students, my team took blood samples from all of them and sent them to the lab to be compared. The result was that the lab found a match for all thirteen bloodstains we were able to retrieve from the twenty-nine blood samples we collected."

"Excellent work, Captain. Now I have one last question, would you please tell us how these quills work?"

"Of course. These quills work on the same principle as contract-signing quills, which for clarification, take a small amount of blood from the user to use as ink before healing the small pin wound made to extract blood.

Dolores Umbridge's blood quills, as we have come to call them, require a student to write for hours, so it keeps on sucking blood, and it's charmed to cause deep cuts in the shape of the words that the students wrote."

By now, none of the Jury members were looking at Umbridge with

pleased eyes — not even those with the Dark faction. If she had laid her hands on the Boy-Who-Lived, she would've not hesitated to lay them on their own children.

Spindlewheel got up, feeling a bit worried about the direction of the trial.

"Captain Robards, did you find anything else in Ms. Umbridge's office other than these quills?"

"We discovered a suspicious amount of ash in the office's fireplace. When we analyzed them, we found that they were from parchment. We think they're from the parchments that the students wrote on."

"But you have no proof to confirm that claim."

". . . No, we don't."

Spindlewheel turned to Owler and said, "That'll be all from our side, Your Worship."

Sirius Black rose again and spoke, "For the next witness, the Prosecution would like to call to the stand, Albus Dumbledore."

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Quinn West - MC - Not here, but definitely in the next chapter.

FictionOnlyReader - Author - You guys were right; it would take another chapter. Also, I suck at righting court scenes. Do you guys have any recommendation fics that do court cases well? I don't remember reading any. I sort of just "roughly" emulating the real deal, fingers crossed.

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If you have any ideas regarding the magic you want to see in this fiction or want to offer some ideas regarding the progression. Move onto the DISCORD Server and blast those ideas.

The link is in the synopsis!

244. Chapter 244: Trial of

DoloresUmbridgePt2

If you want to read ahead of the posting schedule then head over to my Patreón.

All the chapters would still be posted here, but you can support me with a donation and get chapters earlier than usual as a bonus.

[Link in the Bio/Profile](#)

A/N: Sorry about the mix up, here you go, this is the correct chapter.

The moment Sirius asked for Albus Dumbledore to be called, the courtroom buzzed in murmurs — be it the Wizengamot Jury or the audience members, everyone had something to say, and all ears to listen what others had to say. Dumbledore hadn't been seen in the Ministry ever since last year, and to see the ex-Chief Warlock step into the courtroom was a momentous moment.

The Usher exited through the door, leaving a sliver of a crack open. Not a single person in the courtroom didn't have their eyes anywhere but the door. Half a minute later, the Usher entered back into the courtroom and stood by the door side, holding it open — and then from the outside, entered Albus Dumbledore, walking in with a smile on his face, like he had never left. His twinkling eyes shone in the dim room, taking in everybody that sat in the room.

He silently walked over to the stand, bowed to Owler and the Jury before facing Sirius.

"Please state your name and occupation for the record," asked Sirius.

"Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore, I serve as the Headmaster of Hogwarts School of Wizardry and Witchcraft." If it was before, then the list would've extended to Supreme Mugwump of International Confederation of Wizards and Chief Warlock of Wizengamot, but today, he was just the headmaster.

"Mr. Dumbledore, can you tell us how did Dolores Umbridge come to be teaching at Hogwarts?"

Dumbledore glanced at Umbridge, seeing the eyes that wished to shoot a green jet of magic that'd put an end to him. "Dolores took the position at Hogwarts as the Defense Against The Dark Arts because I was unsuccessful in procuring a replacement for Alastor Moody, who vacated the position after the end of the previous term. She was appointed by the Ministry through an Educational Decree issued during the fifties, which stated that if Hogwarts isn't able to fill a teaching position, then the Ministry would provide a suitable replacement."

"So, is she?" asked Sirius. "Is Dolores Umbridge a suitable replacement?"

"Objection!" said Spindlewheel, standing up. "Your Worship, that question doesn't have anything to do with the current matter in hand. The Prosecution is trying to attack and slander my client's character."

"Overruled," said Owler, not even looking up from his table as he wrote his notes, "the charges on the accused are of child endangerment and abuse, which she supposedly performed while in her tenure in Hogwarts. Her ability to guide students is critical in this matter. Headmaster Dumbledore, you may answer that question."

Spindlewheel sat down, his face ugly scrunched up. He had done some digging with his friends who had children in Hogwarts; not a single of their children had anything positive to say about Umbridge, much less sing praises.

"I truly wish I could say otherwise," said Dumbledore sounding sympathetic, "but Dolores isn't fit to hold a teaching position."

"Would you mind elaborating?"

"She eliminated the practical portion from Defense Against The Dark Arts, which renders the subject moot as its core aim is to teach students to

defend themselves, and learning theory without practical lessons is not the way to approach the subject. Even if somehow, students were able to learn the subject, which I repeat isn't possible, Dolores replaced the curriculum with asinine material that is a black spot in the name of education."

"Objection!" Spindlewheel got up once more and spoke to Owler, "Your Worship, the decision to change the curriculum and eliminate the practical portion of the subject was a Ministerial decision, and my client was only following the orders of the Ministry. Mr. Dumbledore is trying to put unjust blame on my client, and because of that reason, I suggest that Mr. Dumbledore be disqualified as a witness."

Spindlewheel was Umbridge's barrister, not the Ministry. His aim for this trial was to get Umbridge out of trouble, or at least make it so that she came out relatively unscathed — if he had to bury the Ministry in the process, he would do it.

Fudge's bloated face went red in his seat; he could feel the stares on him. It wasn't entirely his decision! Fudge thought. It was Umbridge who had suggested that to him, but he couldn't say any of that as it was his signature that went on the orders. He looked up at Umbridge, but she refused to make eye contact with him.

Owler tapped his digits on his table, thinking about Spindlewheel's appeal. After thinking for a few moments, he told his decision, "Albus Dumbledore's statement about the accused's teaching abilities is not going to be included in this trial, but the court isn't going to disqualify him as a witness. The Prosecution may continue with Albus Dumbledore." Sirius pinched his lips together for a brief moment. He wanted the responsibility of education degradation in Hogwarts and had thought that Spindlewheel would let it pass, thinking that he might have some contact

with Fudge, but it seemed that Spindlewheel was firmly on Umbridge's side.

'No matter,' thought Sirius, it might be a small bump in the short-term, but in the future, they could nail Fudge because of the blame now falling upon him.

"Headmaster Dumbledore, did Dolores Umbridge ever come to talk to you about protesting the change in curriculum?" asked Sirius.

"No, she didn't."

Sirius glanced at the Jury but didn't expand on it. Sometimes, it was better to let things sit and let people make up things in their minds.

"As the Headmaster, what can you tell us about Dolores Umbridge's influence at Hogwarts in her position as the High Inquisitor?"

Dumbledore paused in thought before answering, "Dolores, in her position as High Inquisitor, issued more than sixty Educational Decrees over the span of months, and using those, she had created an environment in which it was problematic to defy her. If a student wanted to complain about a Professor, they needed to go to Dolores, meaning that if some had to register a complaint against the Professor of DADA to the High Inquisitor, they wouldn't because they are the same person.

Every single Educational Decree ever issued restricted students in one way or another; not one did give students more freedom or benefit from what they had before Dolores stepped into Hogwarts.

I would also like to say that if it wasn't Dolores fault for ruining DADA, then it was one hundred percent her fault that I got multiple requests from my students about dropping Muggle Studies as one of their subjects because Dolores restricted Professor Lily Potter from teaching anything outside of Ministry approved material, and I would like to point out that she accused Professor Potter — a muggleborn — of teaching make-belief

things about our muggle counterparts.

She also blatantly disrespected Professor Filius Flitwick — a half-goblin — when she banned books by half-breeds. Professor Filius Flitwick is a master of charms and has published many academic books which enhanced the value of the Hogwarts library — and by introducing that Decree, she made him feel not welcome in what has been his home for decades."

Dumbledore's voice had turned passionate when he had started to talk about his Professors. Sirius, who listened to Dumbledore speak, smiled — if there had been any damage to Dumbledore's credibility because of his previous statement being thrown out, then he now surely had recovered it.

"Thank you, Headmaster Dumbledore," said Sirius and turned to Spindlewheel. "Defense can cross-examine the witness."

Spindlewheel stood up from his chair and spoke with his eyes on some papers laid on his table. "Mr. Dumbledore, I don't have much to ask you, but I do want to talk to you about a particular incident," he raised his head to look at Dumbledore, "would you please tell the Jury about the incident in which you assaulted Ms. Umbridge by transfiguring her into a sock?"

A silence zoned down into the courtroom as everyone looked between Dumbledore and Umbridge. Dumbledore had turned Umbridge into a sock? They didn't know about this, which boggled everyone's mind because it was Umbridge, and the woman would have chewed him to the bone by now. But here they sat, listening to this for the first time.

"What would you like me to tell about it?" asked Dumbledore, his speech unhurried and stance open.

"Why did you turn Ms. Umbridge, along the two Aurors who were

accompanying the Minister, into socks?"

Fudge closed his eyes, cursing his past self who thought it would be advantageous to be a part of Wizengamot Jury today. Now he had to sit here under the eyes of his peers, without being able to leave. After today, one thing was for sure: people would look at him, the Minister, differently.

Amelia, on the other hand, was already looking forward to going back to her office and ordering the two Aurors who had been assigned to the Fudge, and asking them why she wasn't informed about this, then further ask them if they would be liked to be booted from the Auror Corps.

"The Minister threatened to have me arrested because I asked him to leave. He ordered his Aurors to arrest me, and I felt threatened because of my wand not being near me," said Dumbledore with a lack of urgency. ". . . You didn't have your wand? But you transfigured three people into a sock — two of them were Aurors."

"Yes, I did, with wandless magic," said Dumbledore as if natural.

"And despite that, you felt threatened?" Spindlewheel asked, his tone uncertain.

"Why yes. Any wizard would feel vulnerable without their wand. I'm no different. Now that I look at it, I feel that my actions were hasty. If I had talked through it, no magic would've come into use."

"So you agree that it was your fault?"

"Partially, yes."

"Rest of the fault lies in the hand of the Minister, Cornelius Fudge, who threatened you."

"Yes."

"And Ms. Umbridge, who was a bystander and hadn't threatened you, was a victim of your magic."

"Yes, that seems to be the case."

"But in reality, you attacked her because she threatened your position as the Headmaster."

"No, that wasn't my intention."

"But, you didn't apologize to her afterward when you realized your fault."

"No, I didn't. . ."

Spindlewheel turned to the Owler and the Jury, "The Defense has nothing more to ask of Albus Dumbledore."

Sirius stared at Spindlewheel, his lips pressed into a white line. He was good, Sirius thought. In one line of questioning, despite Dumbledore's calm external, Spindlewheel had successfully dented Dumbledore's credibility as a character witness. But it was fine, looking at the bigger picture outside of the courtroom, they — The Light Faction — could nail Fudge for implementing the now-in-question Educational Decrees.

Sirius got up from his chair and spoke to Owler, "Your Worship, the next witness is who we — Prosecution and Defense — have deemed to be the student representative of the twenty-nine affected students."

Spindlewheel nodded, "The Defense confirms the Prosecution's statement."

"I would like to call Quinn West to the stand," said Sirius.

When the Jury and the audience heard about the student representative, some thought it would be a random student, while others remembered that it'd be Harry Potter from the projected footage, but they didn't expect to hear the name "West" come out of the barrister's mouth.

The Usher led Dumbledore out, and when he returned, he came back with a teenager dressed in a dark grey three-piece suit. It wasn't anything particular, but no one doubted that this was a West — maybe it was the way he dressed, or how he walked, or perhaps it was just the way he

looked around the courtroom like it wasn't a stage too big for him.

Quinn calmly took the stand, bowed to the Jury, then to Oowler, and nodded to Sirius and Spindlewheel before matching eyes with Umbridge, to whom he sent a small smile — not one of mockery, but a straightforward one with no reflective intention than smiling.

After Quinn was sworn in and asked to state his name for the record, Oowler was the one to address Quinn.

"Mr. Quinn West, on behalf of the court, I'd like to thank you for stepping forward as the representative of the students affected," said Oowler with a comforting smile.

Quinn wordlessly bowed with a smile. If it was putting away Umbridge, he would rise from his grave if needed.

Sirius stood up and began the Prosecutors' side of questioning. "Mr. West, you're one of the twenty-nine students who were assigned detention with Dolores Umbridge, correct?"

"Yes," said Quinn, "to my knowledge, I'm number twenty-nine."

The projector was fired up again, and the holographic footage showed Quinn sitting across from Umbridge, writing with the blood quill in hand.

"If you'd tell to the Jury what did Dolores Umbridge made you write?

What did she make you cut into your hand line after line, for hours at length, and for many days."

Quinn turned to the Jury and spoke in a clear voice: "I must obey Professor Umbridge."

Many members of the Jury gasped. All of them immediately looked at Umbridge, who looked ahead as before, but this time around, her eyes were focused, and chin raised high. It was clear what she thought of the matter.

"Mr. West, please tell the Jury why did Dolores Umbridge assign you the

detention under her?"

"I refused to open a locked door for her."

Sirius turned to the Jury. "Mr. West is an exemplary student who's always top of his class, a Prefect for his house, respected by his peers and well-liked by his Professors. This makes him a model student, but that's not all — Mr. West here started a club with the aim to help Hogwarts students. He calls it AID — which is the abbreviation of Aid In Distress. He has been helping students through AID since his second year, much before he was awarded the position of the Prefect, which tells us much about Mr. West.

But, this year, AID faced jeopardy when Dolores Umbridge threatened to close the beloved club right at the start of the year — and she did it by threatening Mr. West through an Educational Decree which didn't have the authority to close down AID — she tried to abuse her authority—"

"Objection!" spoke Spindlewheel. "Your Worship, the Prosecution is speculating Ms. Umbridge's intention and in doing so are slandering her!"

"Sustained," said Owler, "Prosecution will refrain from making such comments."

"Mr apologies, your honor," said Sirius unperturbed, "but I speak the truth because Dolores Umbridge tried to shut AID down again, and this time she brought forth an Educational Decree just so she could bar the doors of AID from ever helping another student again." He turned to Quinn and asked, "Mr. West, can you tell everyone what Dolores Umbridge said to you when she came into the office?"

"Professor Umbridge," said Quinn, "came into my office with Argus Filch, the caretaker, while I was talking with my friend Luna Lovegood. She handed me an Educational Decree which stated all extra-curricular activities are now subject to review by the High Inquisitor," he looked at

Umbridge, "when I asked her about AID's review, and in reply, I got the answer that AID was already reviewed and had failed; as such, it was being closed immediately."

"Thank you, Mr. West," said Sirius and turned to Jury to continue for Quinn. "The Auror Office took statements of Hogwarts Professors, and not once had Dolores Umbridge talked with them about AID. We asked Dolores Umbridge herself who did she consult on the matter — her answer was a simple: No one. She took the decision on her own, without ever consulting anyone, which means that she had private motive to shut down AID."

"Objection!" said Spindlewheel. "Your Worship, the Prosecution is spouting rubbish!"

"On the contrary, Your Worship," Sirius turned to Quinn. "Mr. West, can you tell me what happened after the first time she tried to shut down AID."

"She gave me detention for disobeying her."

"And what did you do?"

"I thought it was unjust and went to my Head of House, Professor Filius Flitwick, to have it annulled."

"What were the results?"

"He annulled it right on the spot."

"There you have it, members of the Jury. Dolores Umbridge clearly felt humiliated because her power trip was halted and decided to take revenge by turning her malicious eyes towards Mr. Quinn West and AID." Umbridge gritted her teeth in her chair. She wanted to shout and scream, but she knew that if she said anything, she would be found in contempt, and the nobody-Owler would punish her — he had the ability to dismiss the Jury and take matters into his own hands if she wasn't cooperating.

Sirius once again turned to Quinn. It was time to drive this witness' image in the eyes of the Jury to the top floor of the Ministry.

"Members of the Jury, if you may recall, when we question Madam Amelia Bones, she said that she received the reels from a student of Hogwarts. You'd be delighted to know that it was Mr. Quinn West who bravely decided to step forward against injustice and take action by revealing to us the true and vile nature of Dolores Umbridge."

As Sirius had expected, everyone in the court except a few like Owler, Sirius, Spindlewheel, Umbridge and Amelia, and a few others who already knew of the fact started to look at Quinn in an even positive right. On the other hand, Umbridge wanted nothing more than to slit Quinn's throat and watch his blood drain.

"That'd be all from the Prosecution's side," said Sirius and sat back down.

Spindlewheel stood up, it was his chance, and it was his last chance.

There were no significant witnesses after this, only some minor character witnesses which he had prepared to paint his client in a slightly good light. Spindlewheel was no fool; he knew when he had seen the tapes that he wasn't going to win this one.

"Mr. West," he said, it was time to put in whatever dents he could put in to reduce the sentence, "please tell us when did all of this started?"

Quinn stared at the lawyer and spoke the prepared scenario, the one based on truth and mixed with just a dash of falsity. "It all started when I noticed Harry Potter acting strange, holding his hand, and taking glances at Professor Umbridge while in the great hall. I knew something was wrong, so I asked him as a friend, and he told me what had happened. Then and there, I decided that this couldn't be allowed to continue; as such, I came with the idea of recording Professor Umbridge's detention to prove that she was doing something illegal."

Spindlewheel nodded and turned to the projector, which was still projecting but had halted on a still image. "Members of the Jury, if you'd notice the position of the footage, you'd notice that it's pointing down, meaning that the camera was somewhere up above, near the ceiling," he turned to Quinn. "Mr. West, please tell us how you recorded the reels you submitted."

"I planted a small camera in Professor Umbridge's room, near the ceiling, which recorded all the footage I submitted."

"To be clear, you secretly recorded Ms. Umbridge."

"Yes, I did."

"You realize that what you did was highly illegal."

"I'm well aware of the illegality of secretly recording someone."

"And despite that, you still did it."

"Yes."

"Why didn't you go to any of your Professors with this? What guided you to take matters into your own hands?"

"Through the use of Educational Decrees, Professor Umbridge had made it so that it'd difficult to move against her," said Quinn; he wasn't present in the courtroom, and as such went on to repeat what Dumbledore had said about Educational Decrees, just this time, he talked about Educational Decrees restricting teachers instead of students.

"I wasn't confident if the Professors would be helpful in this case. And even I did reach out to them or the Aurors Office, they'd have their hands tied because of the lack of evidence that Professor Umbridge did the crimes. If one would see the footage at length, they'd notice that Professor Umbridge never went as far enough to leave permanent marks on our hands. She'd stop just before the blood quill would leave a mark."

"So you didn't trust your Professors or the Aurors to their jobs? Or any

adult that they would be able to help you?" asked Spindlewheel, attempting to paint a picture of a child playing vigilante.

"I trust my Professors, the illustrious Aurors," said Quinn with a confident smile, "but this is a court of law, and without evidence, every adult here has their hands tied. I simply did what a good citizen would do, even if it meant doing something illegal."

"I see. . . Ms. Umbridge asked Mr. West to open a door in his office, which he refused to do so. Mr. West, please tell everyone why did you refuse to do so?"

Quinn glanced at Umbridge for a second before coming back. "I was angry at AID being closed. She had tried to close it before and had failed, but this time she succeeded."

"What's behind that door, Mr. West?"

"Personal things."

"So, it's fine if you install a camera inside her office, but it's not good if she asks you to show her what's behind a door because it's personal stuff. Can you see the double standards here, Mr. West?"

"Yes, I can see it," said Quinn. Spindlewheel narrowed his eyes at the lack of fluster or panic that he tried to incite. "But unlike her, I don't torture people in my office. My office is named AID; I provide help, a complete opposite to what she did to all of us."

Spindlewheel immediately moved on to the next question, not willing to let the Jury ponder on Quinn's words; his attempts to make the kid panic and crack under pressure were for naught.

"Mr. West, in the dozen or so quills that were found in Ms. Umbridge's office, we couldn't find a match for your blood even though you were the last person to use those quills? Why is that?"

Quinn shrugged, "I wouldn't know."

He, of course, knew. Quinn had known that there were many blood quills, but because he didn't want to leave his blood behind in Umbridge's hands, he cleaned the blood quills before leaving. As for the blood-written parchments, Umbridge burned those in her fireplace. Even the blood sample he had given to the Aurors had been stealthily swapped with a sample extensively treated so that it couldn't be used against him. "I see. . ." said Spindlewheel, not continuing that line of questioning. It was better to let the suspense remain and let the Jury think suspiciously of Quinn. "You waited for months as your friends and classmates continued to serve these detentions. It was only when it was your turn that you decided to turn the reels to the Auror department. Why is that, Mr. West? It seems you only care about yourselves." asked Spindlewheel. Quinn lightly shook his head, "Me serving detention had nothing to do with the timing of me sending tapes. Actually, I was going to complete my detention before sending them in, but then I saw something, and it changed my mind."

His face turned grave, and his shoulders slumped sadly, "I mentioned my friend Luna Lovegood being there when Professor Umbridge came to shut down AID. I sent Luna out so that she won't have to see it shut down; she is as much a part of AID as I am. But it turned out that she told everyone what was happening because when Professor Umbridge and I exited the office to go her office for detention, the entire school was waiting for us in the way."

Quinn looked at the Jury directly, "I saw my friends, classmates, juniors, seniors, and even the Professor — and all of them were looking at us with sadness and sorrow — there I realized they weren't sad for me getting detention, Professor Umbridge gave that to the best of us.

They were sad that AID had shut.

At that moment, it hit me that — ah, I was successful, that I had created something that really helped people, and now that it was gone, they had come to see if it was true, and seeing me walking with Professor Umbridge told them that it was indeed true and that she had taken away the one thing that she had failed to take away before.

In the instant I saw those faces, I realized that I couldn't wait any longer, that I had to send the reels out before Professor Umbridge broke Hogwarts morale, and that's why you only see me one time in the tapes." And that sealed it. Spindlewheel knew it, Sirius knew it, hell, even Owler knew it. That little speech had done its job in turning the Jury's support firmly away from Umbridge and into the Prosecution's lap.

"That'd be all from Defense," Spindlewheel sighed. He knew it was over, but his job wasn't done.

Moving forward, Spindlewheel brought forth his character witnesses, but they didn't do much work as Quinn's passionate speech had rendered them moot, not to mention Sirius went the extra mile and tried to discredit every character witness that was called on.

After that, when all the witnesses and evidence had been presented, both sides presented their closing statements and rested their cases.

"Now, the members of the Jury would cast their vote," said Owler, looking to both his sides. "Those in favor of clearing the accused of all charges?" he asked in his booming voice. There were hands in the air, many of them. . . but much less than half.

"And those in favor of conviction?" Owler looked at the overwhelming majority of the hands going up. "Very well. . . Dolores Umbridge, by the Law of Wizengamot, you have been found GUILTY on all your charges and will be facing just punishment!"

But Umbridge didn't hear any of that. Her entire being was busy staring

at Fudge, who refused to meet her eyes.

Why? She wondered. Why did her beloved Cornelius, who she had supported all along, had raised his hand when the judge asked for those in favor of conviction?

"Cornelius, why?!" she screeched in agony. "I only did as you asked me to! You asked me to make Dumbledore and Potter brats' lives miserable, and I did so! So why do you betray me now?! CORNELIUS! ANSWER ME!" She lunged forward, but the chains kept her bound to the chair, yet the madwoman tried to spring forward, again and again, looking like her world had collapsed.

Fudge, who had just betrayed his closest confidant by raising his hand in favor of conviction so that he could look like a just leader, tucked his chin down in shame, not daring to look at anyone. He hastily got up and out of the courtroom as fast as his legs could make him walk.

Quinn watched all of this while standing on a side with a smile on his face.

The Trial of Umbridge had come to an end.

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Quinn West - MC - Prime witness. Secured victory for Prosecution with rousing mini-speech.

Jones Spindlewheel - Defense - Skilled lawyer, but his client was doomed.

Sirius Black - Prosecutor - Well, that was easy enough.

Lawrence Owler - Judge - Came for one case, now back to enjoying his retirement.

Albus Dumbledore - Headmasters - Actions have consequences.

Dolores Umbridge - Guilty - Mental breakdown.

Cornelius Fudge - Minister - Betrayer.

Wizengamot Jury - Wizengamot seat holders - Dark, Light, Grey — all

factions and their members. You can imagine who was sitting there — Potter, Greengrass, Malfoy. . . I didn't mention them bcos I didn't want to stretch this.

FictionOnlyReader - Author - Umbridge is Guilty. Her actual punishment (which Owler decides) will be mentioned in the aftermath in the next chapter. This chapter was very long, so I might not post tomorrow, but let's see

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If you have any ideas regarding the magic you want to see in this fiction or want to offer some ideas regarding the progression. Move onto the DISCORD Server and blast those ideas.

The link is in the bio!

245. Chapter 245: Factional

Aftermath, Reopen

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" Cheers! " "

Diamond mugs splashing with golden liquid topped off with white frothy foam clinked against each other in the pub buzzing with a Quidditch game sounding out from a radio with speakers cabling to every corner of the establishment, but louder than that were people boisterous with laughter, bursting with loud conversation while they sipped on simpler drinks like tapped beers and straight whiskeys or blew smoke from their flimsy rolls or chewed-on pipes.

"You did great out there," said James Potter, raising his glass to his best

friend, "putting up with Spindlewheel — that man tried to put Dumbledore into the bind."

"Aye, I don't like that slimy snake, always saving those shits from Azkaban, but he sure did well with Umbridge as his client," Sirius Black took a swig of his beverage. Today had been a good day for him — he had put Umbridge behind bars, got to see her crumble, and then got praised by literally everyone he came across.

"I think Oowler went easy on Umbridge," said James, popping a fritter into his mouth, "thirty years is less for a repugnant woman like her — she should've gone behind bars for at least forty years, especially know when the jailors have changed to actual people."

The island fortress had been rebuilt and now was under the direct jurisdiction of the newest divisional addition to DMLE — Division of Azkaban Warden Administration.

"It's over; Oowler gave her what he thought she deserved," said Sirius, "unlike us, he doesn't know what a bitch she truly is. Him ordering her thirty was the best we could get without pulling out everything else she might have done. Boss wanted this to be done quickly; there's no point thinking about it now."

"Well," said James, stretching the well out, "we can, if you'd like, go digging around for her other misdemeanor — now that she's not going to be around, I'm sure many would be much more motivated to come forward. If we put it together right and are able to get her further convicted, we could make her serve the new sentence consecutively."

Sirius peered at James with his mug raised to his lips. James noticed the look and asked, "What?"

"Did you write to him yet?"

James, who was about to drink, slowly put his mug down and sighed, "I

did. He. . . he didn't write much back, what he did write was all deflection. I wrote to him back again, and then again, all I got was anything but why he didn't tell us anything."

"What did he say to Lily? She talked to him, right?"

"She did. Harry did talk to her. . . somewhat — said that it wasn't anything to worry about, that it was all part of the plan, and they couldn't tell anyone because it could've ruined it. But Lily told me that he was clearly avoiding the talk and ran out right after she breached the topic."

"Don't worry about it, mate. He's just at that age. You know how it was — kids want to feel like adults, friends start taking a front row, parents get annoying, and all that jazz. He'll come around."

"Easy for you to say," James chugged his mug down. "You're the fun uncle who he doesn't have to worry about nagging him. I'm the one who needs to discipline him when he does something stupid with you."

Sirius laughed, "There's got to be some upside to being a godfather. I'm having all the fun I can before you die in a ditch, and I take your place."

"You had too much to drink."

Sirius leaned back into his chair of their corner table. "But boy, that West kid really pulled something off, didn't he? Umbridge was nigh-untouchable under Fudge, one kid and a camera, she's shipped off to Azkaban."

"He kept staring back at her."

Sirius looked at his friend, who was staring up at the ceiling. "What do you mean?" he asked; he blinked a couple times to keep focus.

"In the reels. . . Quinn, he kept staring at her the entire time. You didn't watch the part, but the kid kept staring at Umbridge while writing the lines in his blood. It scared her, I could tell, hell, I was a bit nervous.

That kid wrote the most of all, never stopped for a second, probably lost as much blood that the others lost in two days. You're right; that kid's something else. He never looked at the camera once the entire time he was in the room. Harry did look though, a couple times, amateur move." James removed his eyes from the ceiling, brought them down to Sirius, and was surprised to see him leaning over the table, arms crossed with his head resting on them.

"Told you, didn't I? You had a lot to drink," said James, smiling. He slowly got up while shifting his body back and forth, trying to find the balance. "Oh boy," James shook his head, trying to see if it would help shake some booze off, it didn't, so he sat back down, "I wonder if Remus went to bed."

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In an immaculate room with appealing victorian decor, comfortable sofas and chairs to lounge on, and a stocked bar with liquors of choice — everything from butterbeer to gin was available for drinking, waiting to be poured. A soft melody, calm and elegant, sounded in the background, filling the room's ambiance just as the painting set in grand frames did on the walls.

Three men sat around a table with alcohol and platters with assortments of cheese and bread between them. They were Jacob Greengrass, Lodewicus Fawley, and Aashir Shafiq — the three heads of their respective families and members of the Grey Coalition or, as it was popularly known, The Grey Faction.

"Umbridge is out of the picture," said Shafiq; the ice clinked as he placed it on the coaster on the table, "without her, Fudge is going to be trouble."

Dolores Umbridge, for all her faults, was Fudge's strongest asset. She was the hammer and chain that held Fudge's office together with vicious ruthlessness; without her, Fudge would've been split between his patrons a long time ago. Umbridge was why Fudge was able to spread his control into the various departments, which were usually divided into pockets of the powerful noble families.

"Fudge abandoned her right after the trial," said Fawley. "Do you think he knew about what she was doing in Hogwarts?"

"If we were to believe what Umbridge said at the end, Fudge knew what was happening," said Shafiq. All of them were present in the courtroom as part of the Wizengamot Jury.

"It doesn't matter if he knew or not," said Jacob Greengrass. He tapped at the newspaper sitting in the center of the table. It was a rush evening issue of the Daily Prophet with the Dolores Umbridge Trial stamped out on the front page, the courtesy of the exclusive story-breaking journalist, the best in the business, Rita Skeeter.

"Fudge denied any knowledge of the happening, and Umbridge was made the scapegoat," he said. "The real question is what's going to happen now. The elections are next year, and it doesn't look like Fudge is going to have another term."

"Which isn't good for us," sighed Shafiq.

The other two nodded. Fudge's era had been good for them; when the leader was so receptive to external incentives, it made everyone down the power chain also similarly "open-minded" and "open-pocketed."

"If Fudge goes out, then it's Amelia Bones who's going to go up next," said Fawley and sighed. "There's literally no one to stand against her. If she doesn't make any grievous errors, then she's practically a shoo-in for the job."

And all knew that Amelia Bones wasn't one to make potential career-ending mistakes.

"The Head of DMLE moving to Minister," said Jacob, and the other two nodded, knowing what kind of change that would bring. Amelia Bones had been brought up in DMLE — she hadn't worked in any other department other than the one responsible for justice and order.

"We have to move quickly before she gets elected and brings her DMLE flavor to the entire Ministry," said Fawley.

"Should we support Fudge a bit to make sure he doesn't end up getting ousted by a vote of no confidence?" asked Shafiq while he poured himself another pour of whiskey.

Jacob immediately rejected the course of action. "No, that wouldn't be wise. George West wants Fudge out of the Ministry after his term permanently. If we provide Fudge with support, he might end up staying in the Ministry afterward, and that might displease George."

"George West showing interest in politics, that's rare," said Fawley, cutting himself a cheese.

"His grandson was part of the trial," said Jacob. "George West doesn't like himself or his family be part of the politics or be in the public spotlight. He isn't happy that his grandson was pushed into making decisions that put him into the public limelight."

The more powerful and influential a family got, the more they started to retreat out from the public eye. The Wests hadn't been in the public eye for a very long time, and George West was adamant about continuing that status.

Jacob raised his glass to his partners, "To a bright future and a new era."

Fawley and Shafiq raised their glasses and said: " "To a new era." "

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Lord Voldemort, The Dark Lord, sat in his room in a building situated in an unknown location. His bony fingers held the exclusive evening issue of Daily Prophets, reading through the pages that only covered a single story.

"It seems my curse is still at work," said Voldemort, his lipless mouth curling up into a thin smile.

"Master. . ."

Voldemort turned to his long-haired, silver-tongued follower, "Speak Lucius, what is on your mind?"

"What should we do about Cornelius?" asked Lucius. He has been part of the Wizengamot Jury, but his support couldn't keep Umbridge from being burned on the stake.

Voldemort rapped his digits on the armrest of his chair as he stared into the flames burning in the fireplace. "Keep him in the chair. As long as you can keep Cornelius Fudge in power, do it. Don't let him fall off before the end of his term."

"What about when his term ends?"

"Amelia Bones, was it? The next-in-line," asked Voldemort, and Lucius nodded. "Bones. . . Bones. . . Bones. . . ah, yes, I remember, The House of Bones. . . if I remember correctly, only two were left alive."

"Yes, master. Amelia Bones and his niece, Susan Bones. The niece is the same age as my son."

"Head of DMLE, is she? We can't have her taking power in the Ministry. It'd be a nuisance when we come to power. Tell me, Lucius, would Amelia Bones be open to some persuasion?"

"I don't think so, master. Amelia Bones is as hard as one comes."

"I see, what a pity. Then she needs to go."

"Then. . ."

"Not now, Lucius, not now. Is there any progress on getting the Prophecy, Lucius?" Voldemort asked at the end.

"Unfortunately, master, we haven't been able to retrieve it. Rockwood tried to apply his knowledge, but nothing much came out of it."

Augustus Rockwood, one of the ten Death Eaters who had recently been broken out of Azkaban, was an Unspeakable during the war, but because of Igor Karkaroff blowing the whistle on him, he had been sent to Azkaban by Barty Crouch Sr.

"So even Rockwood wasn't able to get through," Voldemort looked down on his lap as his beloved Nagini slithered into his lap. His hand went to her, feeling her sturdy scales; they gave him the sense of safety.

"It seems we would need to do something different," Voldemort turned his face to the other side and spoke to his other follower in the room.

"Wormtail, how's your little friend doing? Is he feeling any better now?"

Peter Pettigrew, who stood in a darker corner of the room, spoke, "He's feeling better, master. Dementors don't suit him, it seems. It's taking him a bit longer to recover. He's not the sturdiest of individuals."

"Get his health back up, Wormtail. It's time for him to pay for his freedom."

"What do you wish from him, master?" asked Peter.

"It's time for the leader of Novellus Accionites to return," said Voldemort, his dull eyes reflecting the flames of the fireplace. "There's a need for a demonstration, a spectacular demonstration."

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"Alright, people! It's a momentous day," Eddie said, facing a crowd made up of forty DA members and people who had been part of Umbridge's twenty-nine. "We have gathered here to celebrate Umbitch's death, the fall of her tyranny, and the revival of what she took away from us."

"She isn't dead," said Marcus from the crowd.

"Bah! Semantics!" Eddie waved him off; Marcus shook his head with a smile. "Yesterday, Umbridge got her judgment, and we got out justice. Now it's time to return everything respectable to Hogwarts by reverting the damage, and today, we start with her worst decision." He raised his arm, pointing towards the head of the crowd, "I ask Quinn West, the Toad Hunter, to step forward. Rest, give him a round of applause!"

Amidst the wave of clapping, shouts, and calls of his name, Quinn walked out from the crowd and stood by Eddie, who wrapped an arm around his shoulder.

"This man has time and time again stood against Umbridge, being the beacon of hope in the tough times, and in the end, he's the one who put her away for good, and today, we are going to reward him by," he stepped aside and raised both his hands to point at a door barred with wood planks, "reopening AID and returning our beloved help club—"

"Consultation service," said Quinn.

"— help club! When AID closed, it was a sad moment for everyone, and today we open it back and return joy to Hogwarts," Eddie slipped his hand behind his back, underneath his outer robe, and to everyone's surprise and shock, took out a big worn down black crowbar.

He pushed it into Quinn's hands, who instinctively grabbed it. Quinn looked at the crowbar with his brows raised, then up at Eddie. "Where did you get this? And. . . why?" he asked, his hands not knowing what to do with the tool.

Eddie shrugged, "Swiped it from Filch's room. Don't worry, I'm just borrowing. I'll return it," he gave him a thumbs-up with a lazy smile.

"Now, take that and get your office back."

Quinn felt the weight of the crowbar in both his hands as he spun it along its length. He looked at the planks nailed to the door frame, raised the crowbar above his shoulder, and drove the sharp edge into the wood with the crowd erupting in cheers. Quinn then unceremoniously took out his fake wand, and with one wave, all planks came ripping out from the door frame, nails and all.

Quinn nodded with his lower lip jutting out. He turned to the crowd looking at him with wide eyes, leaning away, their raised hands in protection as their eyes darted between the planks on the floor and him.

"You didn't think I would take out all of them one by one, did you?" he asked. He tossed the crowbar to Eddie, who fumbled to catch it.

"There's something known as a warning!" said Ivy, her hand clutching Hermione's arm.

Quinn grinned as he turned back to the door, took out the spare key — the original still laid with Filich, but it didn't matter as Quinn was going to change the lock. He opened the door with people peeking over his shoulder and gasped as the room came into view.

"W-What happened to your office?" asked Tracey, her hand touching her throat as she looked at the black that encompassed the entire office.

"Hmm? Oh! Ah, the funeral — I mean, it was just something I did," said Quinn and raised his wand, and color started to return to the room like a breath of life.

Quinn stepped into the office, taking place after the longest he had been away from it during a school year. He turned towards the crowd and looked at the other person who was feeling as joyous as he was right

now. He stepped to a side, leaving space at the door, and she glided right beside him, instantly recognizing what he meant.

"It seems we are back in business," he said, wrapping his arms around her shoulder.

Luna nodded, "I left my favorite scarf in the workshop. I can get it back now." She immediately ran inside the office, heading to get her scarf back.

Quinn chuckled and turned towards the crowd, clasped his hands in the front, and smiled, "Now that we are open again, I announce a special discount for the reopening. So, who's up for buying some notes," he wiggled his brows, "fifth-years? You didn't forget about the OWLs, right?" The groans across the board were more melodious to his ears than the jingle of coin that followed immediately after.

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Quinn West - MC - "I couldn't have done it alone."

James Potter - Father - Confused concerning his teenage son.

Sirius Black - Godfather - Zzz. . .

Jacob Greengrass - Grey Faction Bigshot - Flowing with the tides.

Voldemort - Dark Lord - Has a plan in mind.

Lucius Malfoy - Death Eater - Time to cut Cornelius' allowance.

Peter Pettigrew - Death Eater - In-charge of his inductee.

Eddie Carmichael - Just borrowing - Hold "my" crowbar.

Luna Lovegood - AID employee - Her scarf got dusty.

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If you have any ideas regarding the magic you want to see in this fiction or want to offer some ideas regarding the progression. Move onto the DISCORD Server and blast those ideas.

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## 246. Chapter 246: Quidditch Cup

### Finals

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Quinn walked into the Hogwarts library, the single largest "room" in Hogwarts solely dedicated to books. He passed by the long front desk, manned by the eagle-eyed Madam Pince, who peered into the soul of everyone who entered her dominion, trying to instill the fear of horrible demise if any of her dear children were harmed.

He strode through the sturdy bookshelves packed with thick tomes — dictionaries, encyclopedias, and historical texts — that lined the walls, marched across the floors in rows, forming a maze of sorts for the Hogwarts student to navigate to the reading areas.

The sound of his footsteps against the marble floor could be heard as well as the sound of someone as much as clearing their throat a few bookshelves away. He entered the reading area, the most "noisy" part of Hogwarts, with the students collaborating in hushed tones while others scribbled over their parchment hunched over some book that they had picked out for their assignments.

Quinn looked around, searching for the person he had come to meet. It didn't take more than a few seconds — she sat in the same place they occupied every day since the start of their meetings.

"Good evening, Daphne. How're you today?" Quinn said, carefully pulling out the chair to not make any noise.

"Good evening," she said, looking up from her cache of AID notes.

"Only eight weeks remain to your OWLs," he said, "how do you feel about that? Ready to knock it out of the park?"

Daphne nodded.

"Excellent, what do you want to cover today?" asked Quinn, settling himself in the chair as he peeked over to what she had opened in the AID notes.

"Arithmancy: The Law of Quadruple Pairings."

"Ah, no wonder. That one's a bit tricky, but I do have a trick that'll help you get a grasp of things. You actually don't need to. . ."

In the library, with a ward around them stifling all outgoing sound, Quinn tutored Daphne while clearing any doubts she footed. It wasn't difficult for Quinn to teach someone smart like Daphne, who had basics down; as such, time passed quickly, with Quinn enjoying going over some topics he himself hadn't touched in some time.

"I guess that's it for today," said Quinn. He pushed the parchment with a solved example towards Daphne. "Your Arithmancy just needs practice. Solve some more problems, and that'll get the concepts clear."

Daphne nodded while comparing what she had done with Quinn's work.

Quinn tilted his head. There was something different about Daphne today, he thought. His eyes slightly narrowed, wondering what it was, trying to pinpoint why it seemed so distant today.

"Daphne," he called.

"Yes?"

"Please, look at me."

The quill in Daphne's hand stilled. She glanced up from her work and looked at Quinn as he asked. "Yes?" she asked.

"Is there something wrong?" he asked. "Why does it seem that you're avoiding eye contact with me, and you haven't spoken much today."

"It's nothing like that. You must be imagining things."

Quinn stared at Daphne, but the girl went back to taking notes. There was once again a silence between them. Quinn took account of the three-quarter of the hour they had spent together; Daphne hadn't spoken to him other than asking questions. Something was clearly bothering her.

"Daphne," he said again.

"How're things going at AID?" Daphne asked but didn't look away from her work. "I heard you sold a lot of notes after the reopening. You're again going to get busy. . ."

Quinn opened his mouth only to close it. There was clearly something bothering her, but he couldn't tell what it was. He tried to think if he missed something — her birthday, no, that had already passed; had he promised something, not that he could remember.

A silence settled between them as Quinn gazed at Daphne while she never looked up at him. Then it struck Quinn, and he knew he shouldn't, but it did turn his frown upside down.

"Daphne. . . I'm still going to teach you, you know," he said, leaning towards her with his cheek resting on his palm. "This isn't going to end just because AID reopened."

Daphne's quill stopped, and she finally looked up from her work. "You don't have to do tha —."

"We're going to continue this," said Quinn, cutting her off and intertwining his fingers with hers. "This might have started because AID got closed, but that doesn't, in any way, mean that it has to stop now that AID reopened."

Daphne grasped Quinn's hand back.

"You're cute worry about silly things," said Quinn, grinning. "If you don't like something, you can always-always tell it to me."

Daphne nodded, "It's just that, I enjoy our time a lot and. . . but you get busy so. . ."

"I do too, so very much, and if I want to spend time with you, then I'll take out time to do so — no excuses."

In the quiet library, two people grew closer than they were before.

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With the OWLs, NEWTs, and the rest of the end-of-term examinations right on the horizon, it was time to pack up the extra-curricular and co-curricular activities for the year and go into study mode. In Hogwarts, there was no bigger out-of-curriculum as Quidditch, and today, was the day for its biggest game of the year.

"YEAH, HEHEHE-AH! Hogwarts! Are! You! Ready! For the biggest game of the season?!"

Quinn's voice riding on the loudspeaker pitched to every corner of the packed stadium — Hogwart students wearing their team colors, carrying rain gears in case of a downpour, holding their bottles, mugs, and glasses of butterbeer while screaming and chanting through their freshly painted faces. Pennants and flags flew throughout the stands as the Hogwarts crowd sat shoulder-by-shoulder, showing camaraderie among even the most estranged housemates — half-naked boys could be seen dotting the crowd with their bellies painted with numbers and letters, offering the most excitement many had shown through the entire year, while some threw food at anyone who wasn't in their camp.

"Yeeessss! Oh boy, now I'm regretting skipping the last game," Quinn grinned into the microphone. "The game hasn't even started yet, but I can already tell that it's going to be a great one! And putting a little sparkle

into this game, I'm happy to announce that for this season's finale — Ravenclaw versus Gryffindor, I'll be joined by a guest announcer. Give it up for the one-and-only, Head Boy, Captain of the Hufflepuff's, Champion of Hogwarts — CEDRIC DIGGORY!"

A crackle coughed in the stadium as Cedric amped up the second microphone. "Thank you for that introduction, Quinn. It's an honor to be a part of this game, but I would like to start with correcting you on something — I'm no longer the Captain of the Hufflepuff Quidditch Team, I stepped down from that position after our last game."

Cedric's voice caused the Hufflepuff crowd to burst into applause, whistles, shouts, and cheers for the best player and Captain they had in years.

"Ever so noble, aren't you, Mr. Diggory. Well, nevertheless, your contribution to Hufflepuff Quidditch and Hogwarts Quidditch as a whole can't be ignored," Quinn flipped over a sheet on his little commentator's table. "You're Hufflepuff's all-time top-scoring Seeker with most the most snitches caught in the least games played. Your Hogwarts career spans over five years — six if we include last year's Quidditch Tournament, and you were made Captain when you were in your fourth year and have held onto the posting till this year — in that time, you led Hufflepuff to their highest win-to-loss percentage in a century — an impressive resume no matter how you look at it."

"You flatter me. I couldn't have done it all alone. I have my team members having my back on the pitch and the entire house supporting me to thank for. They have been with me every step of the way."

"My magic, you're humble. Have you thought of joining politics? I predict you'll do great there. Ah, it seems we have to cut this conversation here as Ravenclaw and Gryffindor have entered the field," he added at the

end, seeing the entry signal.

Both teams flew out of their corners, emerging out of blue and red fogs, as they flew low, nearer to the ground, just below where the stands started, circling around the pitch in formation, giving the people a glance at the two teams competing for the Cup and the position of the best team.

"Today's game is quite exciting even without the final tag attached to it," said Quinn. "First of all, we have to talk about the Weasley twins."

"Yes, we have to," said Cedric. "Today can't be talked about without mentioning those two. It's their last game today, after all."

"Yes, the Weasley twins, Cedric, I apologize for the analogy I'm about to use, but if you're a historical figure in Hufflepuff Quidditch, then the Weasley twins are going down as historical figures in the annals of Hogwarts Quidditch."

"I forgive you," said Cedric, chuckling.

"Fred and George Weasley are all-time great Beaters in Hogwarts history. They're the best duo in a very long time, a couple of centuries, to say the least. I have some data, but that doesn't do both of them justice; they have been consistently phenomenal in their six years of their playing. They have been terrifically effective against Chasers squads no matter what the year, no matter what house. It has been a pleasure watching them play, and I regretfully say that after today, Gryffindor is going to lose an asset that had been their backbone for years, going back to the Oliver Wood era."

"I agree wholeheartedly with you, Quinn. But, as we are talking about last games, it's the last game for Angelica Johnson and Alicia Spinnet as well. After today, Gryffindor will not only lose the Weasley menace, they'll also lose two-thirds of the Gryffindor Vixens, leaving only Katie Bell as an experienced Chaser."

Quinn nodded deeply. He wasn't a huge Quidditch buff, but when you had been doing commentary for years, it was inevitable that he had become knowledgeable about the sport. "After today, Gryffindor is going to lose their long-standing continuity and will need to rebuild. I just hope they'll be able to come together strong as ever the next year."

"And, we can't ignore his return to the Quidditch field," said Cedric, and the crowd knew exactly who he was talking about.

Quinn smiled, "On the orders of Headmaster Albus Dumbledore, the season-long ban on Harry Potter, the Gryffindor Seeker, has officially been lifted for the final game of the season. He'll be replacing Ginny Weasley, who had been seeking for Gryffindor in Potter's absence."

Harry Potter flew in the front of the Gryffindor Team, one of his hands gripping his Firebolt, while the other waved to the crowd as both teams stood in the center of the pitch.

"But today, they're going to be facing Ravenclaw," said Cedric, a bitter smile on his face.

"Yes," Quinn chuckled, "with four Gryffindor players retiring today, I fear that it might turn out to be the feel-good ending they're aiming for."

"No, not with how he's playing," said Cedric, "it'll take a titanic effort for them to overcome this Ravenclaw Team."

On the field, the two teams faced each other, waiting for Hooch as she performed a pre-game check on the game balls.

"So, Johnson," said Eddie, making Angelina look at him, "you decided to put Potter on the field, huh. Are you sure that's a smart decision?"

"Oye, Carmichael, don't spout nonsense," Ron said, limbering up shoulders and neck.

"Hey, I'm just asking," Eddie said, raising both his hands, looking at Harry, "I mean, Potter hasn't been on a broom this year, he might be

rusty, and you know, the Weaslette had been playing well, so was it really a good move to bring in someone who hasn't played in a while when the Cup is at stake?"

"Keep yourself to your team, Carmichael," said Potter, "or who knows, you might not get to touch the quaffle, and I'll have the snitch in my hand."

"Alright, if you say so," said Eddie, rocking back-and-forth on the heel of his feet, "you know you're right, I need to keep myself to my team," he wrapped an arm around Roger Davis' shoulder, "it's Captain's last game, so the least I could do is to send him off with the Cup. That seems to be the most fitting farewell." He looked at Angelina, Alicia, Fred, and George, "We can let you guys touch the Cup for a while if you guys want."

"Oh, Carmichael," said Fred, and George continued, "we are looking forward to jamming a bludger in your face today."

Eddie threw his head back and laughed, "All the power to you, guys. You guys tried last time, and see where that got you, let me tell you — a crushing defeat."

He glanced at Hooch walking toward them and turned to Ron, "Oye, Weasley, the not-funny one, yeah you. I'll be coming for you today, hard, so try to touch the quaffle, okay? I'm warning you because I don't want to see you crying after the game."

Back in the commentator's booth, Quinn watched as Hooch raised the quaffle. "Alright, rowdy people, Madam Hooch has raised the quaffle; the game is about to start; let's see who gets the initiative and spearheads the game," his voice boomed through the stadium.

On the pitch, Harry tensed on his broom, angling it perfectly before the start of the match. He tuned out Quinn and waited to see the quaffle fly

up into the air.

The second the official tossed the quaffle, he moved his Firebolt as quickly as it could rev up. He banked left and flew spinning between the two Ravenclaw center chasers before they could make a play for the quaffle. Both dispersed, attempting to not get part of a collision when the free-quaffle was up for grabs.

Cho attempted to follow Harry but wound up blocked by her own Chasers.

The result was the quaffle fell unclaimed. At least until Alicia cut under it. She reached out to the falling quaffle, but before she could reach it, a blue blur scooped up it before her.

"What a diversion by Potter!" Cedric's excited voice boomed in the stadium. "Spinnet's speed was impressive; for a second, I thought she would go uncontested — but Carmichael struck again; no one's better than him the first grab! There he goes, gaining altitude — and what's this he scores on the low side — Ron Weasley misses it by a foot! Score! That's a quick 10-0 to Ravenclaw!"

Eddie pulled up on his broom, coming to a halt before he went behind the goal hoops, and turned back to go back to his side, and on his way, he winked to Harry, who had come near to Gryffindor hoops.

"That was indeed great diversion, Potter," he said, "but it's going to take a lot more than that to keep me away from MY quaffle."

Harry wrinkled his nose as his brows furrowed. That diversion was planned and practiced so that they could get their hands on the quaffle first and start with the tide on their sides. It was proven from the previous year's games, and this year, every time Eddie got the first grab on the quaffle, Ravenclaw would almost always lead, and it became difficult to wrestle that lead away.

It seemed today was no different, and Ravenclaw gained a strong lead.

Eddie shifted the gears on his broom, cutting very close to Angelina, causing her to drop the quaffle. It was quickly picked up by Eddie, who tossed it to the other Chaser, who fed Roger Davies for an easy goal.

Eddie's eyes glanced up to the scoreboard quickly. 120-40 was a promising start. But it meant he still had to be on high alert.

As much as he liked Cho as his teammate, she wasn't doing much more than following Potter around. And he wasn't sure if she could keep up Potter from out-flying her.

'Well, I just need to score more,' he thought and got back to work.

The game continued, and both teams began piling up points — Ravenclaw much more than Gryffindor. Soon, the game reached its climax.

It wasn't long before the golden ball was spotted, fluttering lazily down by the ground. It couldn't have been more than a few feet from the grass.

Harry spun his broom around and angled himself into a corkscrewing dive until he had the line he wanted. Cho immediately followed after him.

"And Potter dives again!" Quinn announced for everyone in attendance to hear. "Is it a feint? I think it's not! Oh, there he goes rushing. Chang follows, oh, she gains upon him! Potter's back in the lead. . ."

It was then Cedric spoke up into his microphone, "Carmichael has the quaffle. Everybody! The score's 350-200! If Carmichael scores before now, Ravenclaw will win the game no matter if Potter gets the snitch or not, but if he doesn't, the game will go to a shoot-out! Will he able to. . ."

Everything went silent for Eddie as he flew towards the goal hoops. The crowd's voice disappeared, the commentators became non-existent, there was only him and the goal hoops with only faceless silhouettes in his

way.

'It felt good,' he thought as he dipped below a raging Bluder, rammed his arm into someone's chest to shake them off of him.

This was the time Eddie felt in complete control. Despite the rushing wind assaulting his ears, he could listen to his heartbeat and even to the sound of his breathing. The pressure of the game on the line brought something out of him that nothing else did.

'Ah, I hope this never ends.' He cocked his hand up his shoulder and threw the ball towards the uppermost of the three hoops. The quaffle left his hand, his fingers putting his special spin on it. He watched as faceless silhouette dived towards the quaffle, but the quaffle suddenly rose and slipped the blocking hand, dinged into the hoop's ring, and fell past the circle.

The silhouette turned back into Ron Weasley and sounds returned.

"GOAL!" he heard Quinn speak, and immediately a second after, he heard Cedric speak, "Potter's got the snitch! But it's too late; Carmichael scored! 360-350 for Ravenclaw! Ravenclaws are the new champions!"

Eddie's chest rose up and down as he stared at the scoreboard. He looked at his team celebrating in the middle of the field. But he didn't join them; instead, he flew towards the teachers' booth where commentators sat.

Quinn spoke as soon as he arrived, "Eddie! You won! Boy, you're a champion now! You did —"

Eddie placed his legs on the railings, the broom still under him, and pulled Quinn by his shoulder, cutting him off mid-sentence.

"Listen!" Eddie said, his heart beating hard in his rib cage. "Listen," he said again, "I . . . I'm going to do this!"

"What? What do you mean," said Quinn, still leaning over the table as Eddie didn't let him go.

"I . . . have decided. . . Quidditch, I'm going to do Quidditch," said Eddie.

Quinn blinked a bit as the realization struck him, "You mean after Hogwarts," he grinned, "you're going pro after Hogwarts?"

"Yeah, I will be a pro, yeah."

Quinn's smile bloomed. Before Quidditch, Eddie switched things every week. It was only Quidditch that he stuck on.

"Alright, go do it!" said Quinn. "You go become a pro! Someday, I'll buy a team and have you play for me."

Eddie nodded, but it seemed he wasn't listening to it. He let Quinn go and flew away, but again, he didn't go to his team; instead, he flew toward the stands.

He landed in the crowd of green as the crowd parted to give him space.

His eyes only had for a brunette that sat in front of him.

"Eddie?" said Tracey Davis, standing up from her place, but before she could say anything, Eddie pulled her close and. . .

"Holy shit! He kissed her!" Quinn's surprised voice spread in the stadium.

Tracey, wide-eyed with surprise, was pulled into her first kiss, but then realization struck her about what was happening, and her arms coiled around Eddie's neck as she leaned into the kiss.

Sitting beside her, Daphne watched with her brows raised higher than ever as her best friend kissed Eddie Carmichael in broad public with so many watching. She wasn't sure if she could do that in front of so many people.

Eddie and Tracey's lips stopped their dalliance as they stopped to breathe; their foreheads rested against each other.

"I wanted to do that for a while now," said Eddie, putting his arms around her waist, pulling her closer.

Trace smiled, "No one was stopping you. . ."

"I'm going to need more."

"We can go now."

"Okay."

The cheers spiked up, but the two couldn't hear anything.

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Quinn West - MC - He did it! Oh my god, he did it!

Eddie Carmichael - Future-pro - Kissing = Good.

Tracey Davis - Delightfully surprised - Already thinking about which broom closets are the best because. . . Kissing = Good.

FictionOnlyReader - Author - Sniff. . . my boy is all grown up!

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If you have any ideas regarding the magic you want to see in this fiction or want to offer some ideas regarding the progression. Move onto the DISCORD Server and blast those ideas.

The link is in the bio!

247. Chapter 247: Professor Of

DADA

If you want to read ahead of the posting schedule then head over to my Patreón.

All the chapters would still be posted here, but you can support me with a donation and get chapters earlier than usual as a bonus.

Link in the Bio/Profile

"What's the use of sitting here when nothing's going to happen," said

Eddie, his arms crossed with a frown marring his face. "I could be dueling you in the grounds outside than sitting here wasting my time."

Quinn flipped a page on his book; his facial features softened, his features relaxed. "If you want to, we can play Accio-Tug-of-War to pass the time," he said.

"No, I'm not feeling like Accio-Tug-of-War right now."

"You just don't want to lose."

"Nuh-uh!"

Marcus sitting between Eddie and Quinn, placed his palm on his open book in his hand and looked straight up. "If we are called here, then there must be a new Professor who will teach us today." He turned to Eddie, "it would look good if you do a revision on the theory — no, I'm not talking about Umbridge theory — be ready in case someone does come to teach us so that we don't embarrass ourselves. It'll do us no good to blame Umbridge now, so try to brush up on the topics."

Today was the first day after Umbridge's arrest, and first thing in the morning, they had been called to the Defense Against The Dark Arts for a supposed class.

"Do you know about something," asked Eddie, taking out an actual Defense Against Dark Arts book from his bookbag. "Did the Professors tell the Prefects something about who's coming for the class?"

Quinn shook his head. There was no notification to the Prefects about what was going to happen in today's class.

"Do you think Alastor Moody is going to come in?" asked Marcus. "Or maybe an Auror would come to teach us? That'd be exciting. . . do you think they'll answer my questions about the Azkaban Eleven?"

Quinn chuckled, "Why're you already assuming that it's going to be an Auror?"

"What if it's a Hit Wizard?" Eddie asked. In his mind, Hit Wizards, who were exclusively combatants with much more firepower, were much more interesting than Aurors, who were a mix of combatants and investigators.

"Who do you think it's going to be?" Marcus asked Quinn.

"I can't say," said Quinn, "maybe, Professor Lupin would return till the end of the year."

"Or-Or, maybe-maybe," said Eddie, raising his finger, "we're looking at it the wrong way, and it's not something one from outside — I bet it'll be Snape. Didn't he want to teach Defense Against The Dark Arts? I'm sure he wants to get his stinky hands on the job."

And so it happened that Eddie was indeed correct, or at least partially true, as his words were immediately followed by an amused chuckle from near the classroom's door.

"Professor Snape did ask to be put in charge of the Defense Against The Dark Arts, but with the OWLs and NEWTs so close, it wasn't a wise decision to give a teacher the duty of two subjects."

Quinn, Eddie, and Marcus turned their heads towards the back of the room, and there stood Dumbledore smiling by the door, his hands behind his back, peering at them through his half-moon glasses that sat near the edge of the bridge of his nose.

"And because I found myself free, I decided to take on teaching,"

Dumbledore smiled widely as more and more students started to turn to look at him — immediately straightening up at the sight of the Headmaster standing by their door.

Dumbledore walked through the front of the class. He took out his wand and, with a flick, the green board on wheels pulled out from the corner to the front of the class. A stick of pinkish-red chalk rose from the board's ledge and wrote Albus Dumbledore on the board.

He faced the class and was about to address the students but stopped to look at the windows in the classroom. Another wave and the numerous mirrors and lenses hanging around the room, fixed on ends of mechanical arms, adjusted themselves — with every adjustment, the stream of light

coming from the windows would get directed by the mirrors and lenses to light up the classroom better than it had been ever before. No Defense Against The Dark Arts had been in the position long enough for them to get proficient at the lighting system.

"Good morning, dear children," Dumbledore's beard rose at the edge of his mouth. He didn't get a good morning back because of the stiff-surprise in the room. "From today till the end of this year, I'll be taking Defense Against The Dark Arts for all years — first to seventh — as your Professor. Unfortunately, you won't be able to find me in the Professor's staffroom like the others, but I'm willing to stay behind after every class to answer your questions. Yes, Mr. Belby, please ask your question."

Marcus lowered his hand and asked, "Sir, aren't you a Transfiguration teacher?"

"That's correct, but before I was the Head of Transfiguration and a Professor of Transfiguration — I was a Professor of Defense Against The Dark Arts — in fact, it was my first full-time job. So please be assured, I'm qualified to teach you the subject."

. . . That wasn't ever a doubt, though the entire class. The greatest magical in the country as a long-time educator was a dream that even the uninterested of students would pay attention to.

Quinn replaced his book into his bookbag, took out a notebook and pen to pay attention. No way was he going to do other homework or work on his Occlumency when Dumbledore was teaching a class.

"Now I understand that it's too late for us to follow a formal curriculum and get all of you caught up with what a sixth-year student would usually learn," students looked at each other worried — even if they had performed well enough in their OWLs to attend a NEWT level DADA class, if they didn't score well in their sixth-year, they would be removed

from the seventh-year part of the NEWT-level course, "so we aren't going to follow a formal curriculum; instead, our classes will be a series of interactive sessions about Defense Against The Dark Arts, that I think will be beneficial for all of you. Please don't worry, the end-of-year examinations will be adjusted accordingly, and I'll personally set your papers and practicals based on what we discuss in our sessions together." That alleviated tension from the shoulders of students worried about the end-of-year examinations.

"Yes, Mr. Hopkins," Dumbledore said to Carl Hopkins, Gryffindor, who raised his hand.

"Professor, what would we do about next year? The NEWTs cover everything we were supposed to learn this year and will learn the next year. We haven't learned anything from Umbridge, and that would affect our NEWT scores."

"I'm already in talks with Madam Professor Griselda Marchbanks — the Governor of the Wizarding Examinations Authority that runs OWL, NEWT, and WOMBAT. She sympathizes with the egregious errors made this year and has already put into the process to change the criteria for OWLs and NEWTs. Of course, next year, your batch will require to learn an extra amount to at least cover topics required to contribute to the seventh year curriculum."

"That seems fair," said Eddie aloud for everyone to hear.

Knowing smiles surfaced on a few faces in the classroom — the faces of DA members. They couldn't care less if the end-of-year examination were the same as usual, and having that confidence felt good, so much so that their hidden smiles edged to smug.

"Now, I'd like to open this class with a question on which we would build for today," said Dumbledore; he raised his wand, and the stick of chalk

rose with it writing as Dumbledore spoke: "What do you all think is important for magic to work to its fullest?"

The answers came immediately.

"Knowledge," said Katie Bell, a DA member.

"Intent," followed Cho Chang, another DA member.

"Emotion," finishes Marcus, yet another DA member.

Dumbledore's hand moving up to stroke his beard, stopped midway, and a smile surfaced as the rapid answers sunk in. ". . . That is correct," he said, "those three — Knowledge, Intent, and Emotion — those were the answers I was looking for. Fifteen points to Gryffindor and thirty to Ravenclaw. Then can you also tell me why they are important?"

"Knowledge about what you want your magic to accomplish is required as information and understanding gives the magic a solid structure that is essential for a witch to cast magic effectively," said Katie, expanding on her point. "Without knowledge, magic's too unpredictable and quirky to cast consistently."

Cho immediately followed after Katie, "Intent is basically having a clear image of what you want your magic to be. If you're casting a disarming charm and have a clear image of a wand flying off the hand, then the magic will work much better than when you don't have an image in mind and are hoping that chant and wand movement would do the work for you. The clearer your intentions, the more the magic will work as you want it to work."

Dumbledore opted out from speaking and turned to Marcus, who started talking when Dumbledore looked at him. "Emotions are the power behind magic; channeling emotions into magic will provide magic with an extra punch, with a peppy efficiency, and with an ease that just doesn't come otherwise. To provide an example, shield charm, Protego, works a lot

better when you're thinking of a memory that invokes determination or perseverance or defiance," said Marcus.

Dumbledore's eyes all but gleamed with delight. "Twenty-five points to Gryffindor and fifty to Ravenclaw," he said before asking. "Mr.

Carmichael, can you tell me when knowledge isn't necessary to cast magic."

Everyone's head turned to Eddie, who sat leaning into the seating bench, one of his hands resting on the bench's back and behind Marcus's back.

"For a majority of magic, asking for complete knowledge about every step of the magic is terribly improbable and not at all feasible. To take an example, if one wants to transfigure a desk into a pig, then it's too much to ask for the knowledge of the pig's anatomy — but the fact remains that we have been already taught this magic, and many of us can perform it. Now to directly answer your question, while having a base knowledge is critical, it's not necessary to know all of it — the magic will take of what you don't know. Of course, the more knowledge and understanding one has, the easier it gets for them to cast. But the point remains that one doesn't need to know everything to successfully cast a piece of magic."

"Fifteen points to Ravenclaw," said Dumbledore, smiling eye to eye.

"Children, if you keep answering like this, I fear that Ravenclaw and Gryffindor will have substantial leads by the time we end today." He turned to Quinn and posed him a question, "Mr. West, tell me the demerits of emotions."

"Emotions are the powerhouses pumping the extra life into magic, but that extra something can very easily get out of control if the emotions aren't kept in a check. Even without magic, emotions have the tendency to heavily influence people, and when you put them into the playing pen with magic, while they're able to create something spectacular, they can

just as cause chaos and derail both the spell and cause major harm to the caster.

For example, using the feeling of glee or happiness to cast magic like. . . a cheering charm will render amazing results, but if you don't keep these emotions in check, then they'll cause substantial difficulties.

Happiness and glee might seem harmless emotions, but if one lets them affect you while casting magic, they will desensitize the caster from feeling sadness and sorrow, and no matter what the situation, they'll keep feeling happy. Soon, excessive optimism will kick in, and the decision-making abilities will suffer. They'll get easily pleased and easily persuaded, which would bump up the chances of getting taken advantage of by getting scammed. Thus, it's important to keep any and all emotion, WHILE CASTING MAGIC, in check."

"Excellent! Take twenty points for the answer," Dumbledore said, and the death stick shot mini-fireworks from its tip. "This. . . all of this was all I wanted to cover today and in the next session, and it seems that some of you have a marvellous handle on the understanding of these topics. It saves me from giving an introduction, which I'm deeply impressed for, so now, let's dive into these three factors and learn in detail how you can use and manage these aids to the best of your advantage."

Dumbledore then started to speak about knowledge, intent, and emotion. And for the entire class, Quinn couldn't find a stretch of minutes where he could put his pen down as he feared he would miss jotting an exciting new interpretation or insight on the topics that Quinn thought he had already had a good handle.

'Ah, this is it. Now, I remember how this felt,' thought Quinn as he made a note in his notebook. The last time he had felt like this was when learning Occlumency with Alan. Every word related to mind magic that

ever came out of Alan's mouth was so insightful, so effectively phrased, and so utterly wise that Quinn had many a time found himself coming of trances.

Right now, he was touching on a feeling almost identical to that.

Dumbledore was really good, thought Quinn. He didn't want to disrespect the other Professors, but they had nothing on Dumbledore, just with one class from the headmaster.

At the end of the class, Dumbledore stood by the door, bidding the students goodbyes as they exited to make space for the next class to come.

As Quinn walked by Dumbledore, he nodded, "Professor Dumbledore."

"Mr. West, great job today," greeted Dumbledore smiling, but then his eye widened as his eyes followed after Quinn, who had already walked away with the crowd.

The smile on Dumbledore turned deeper as his entire face portrayed the emotion he was feeling. He couldn't help but chuckle and then laugh some.

After all, Quinn West had just called him Professor for the first time.

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Quinn West - MC - Taught a lot and learned a lot.

Albus Dumbledore - Headmaster Dumbledore - Professor Dumbledore.

FictionOnlyReader - Author - Next chapter, we move to the vault. I might complete in one, but I think it'll take two to complete the entire task, reward, and surprise.

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If you have any ideas regarding the magic you want to see in this fiction or want to offer some ideas regarding the progression. Move onto the DISCORD Server and blast those ideas.

The link is in the bio!

248. Chapter 248: Stigweard

Gragg's Legacy

A/N: Hello, everybody. As a number of you might know, Philippines was recently hit by a devastating Typhoon — Typhoon Ria, locally known as Odette. It has racked up a sickening death count that has long past climbed up to triple-digits. But what I didn't know was that Ria was the 15th Typhoon that hit Philippines this year.

Millions of people are affected, hundreds of thousands people were made to evacuate their homes, essentially uprooting their lives.

So, I urge those who have the means, please donate to the relief funds to help those in dire need of any help.

One of the relief funds you can donate to: [ [new-donate-.-ayalafoundation-.-ORG](#)]

Quinn stretched his body — touching his toes with the opposite hands, arching his spine back, twisting his waist, and all the works. He looked at his feet, the toes right at the edge of the line that separated between the room from the safe solid floor and the vast field of cubes dividing the floor that might as well be called landmines.

He bent forward and rubbed his legs below his knees to scratch the phantom itch in the places his legs were pierced last time he was in the third room of the Architect's Vault.

Quinn cracked his neck and took a step onto the first cubical tile, and unlike the last time, nothing happened. The tip of his lips curled up ever so slightly. He looked down and saw the small hole in the tile — he had pocketed the cylinder shot at him the last time.

"If the material isn't reinserted," he said, smirking, "then it's not going to reset." He took another step forward with his eyes on the next tile, which

now had two holes as he had yet again pocketed the two cylindrical projectiles last time around.

It was the next step Quinn was worried about. He looked to the opposite side of the room, and he was standing right in front of the exit door. A straight path laid in between them — it was the shortest path he could take to get to the door.

It's the most obvious path, thought Quinn. Anyone with a sound mind would want to take the shortest path in a trap-laden area. There was no point in taking another route, hoping to face an easy path because the traps became increasingly difficult as he would move away from the entry door and walk towards the exit door. It had been proved by the amalgamation of his previous experience — he had faced tiny cylinder projectiles as he had tried to go deeper into the room and had been shot with small circular pellets when he had hobbled back — both of those tiles were just near the entry door.

But this was the Architect who had designed this place, and it might be just him, but Quinn didn't trust the creator a bit. Maybe it was because he had a name and a face to rant on that Quinn was channeling everything wrong onto Stigward Gragg.

"Alright," said Quinn, wiggling his body to get loose, "just like planned. Need to be quick and strong."

He took another step and stepped onto the next tile, and immediately, like a bolt of lightning descending from the heavens to strike the earth, a baton-sized rod shot from the ceiling. Quinn had only a split second to look up before the rod was near him.

A red screen ballooned up in front of his eyes, and Quinn watched as the screen stretched towards him as the rod tried to tear through. Quinn raised his hands, and the red flexible tarp-like screen faded for the stone-

rod fell into his hands.

Quinn injected his magic into the rod and nodded, "I knew it. I knew it; he had a reason for that mindless labor. Thank god it had meaning."

He recognized the stone in his hand. It was the same type as one of the hundreds of material cubes he slogged through.

"Ugh, this is going to be difficult," Quinn ruffled his hair. He held the tip of the rod with one hand while the other held onto the shaft. After a few seconds, Quinn pulled on the tip, and it came breaking off from the rest of the rod.

He dropped the rest of the shaft onto the ground and watched as the rod turned into a blob and sunk into the ground. Quinn looked up, and as per the rules of the room, nothing was shot at him.

A sigh escaped him as he pocketed the tip he separated using transmutation. The specially made stone — a product of alchemy — was complicated to transmute because of the complex physical structure, and it was okay with objects of smaller size, but when an entire column was falling over his head or an enormous mass of stone suddenly launching towards him out of nowhere, it would get difficult to maybe cut a portion off.

"Nothing I can handle," said Quinn, clearing his throat.

He stepped forward and depressed a tile, triggering a trap. This time the rods didn't come from the sky but from the floor. Four rods emerged from four tiles a distance from him like something coming out of the water and drilled towards him.

Quinn raised a hand and a cutting whistle like a screech as his magic cut down on the momentum. He raised his hand, and a rod floated towards him while the other three fell to the ground. Once again, he transmuted a chunk off before letting the rest sink into the ground.

Quinn took another step without hesitation, and maybe he should've had some hesitation. The second the tile depressed, and abruptly Quinn found himself sinking into the ground — into liquid.

"Shi—"

Quinn flapped around, but a six-tile area around him had turned into liquid stone, and he couldn't find a place to hold. He tried to float, but it was like quicksand as he sunk, but unlike quicksand, the sinking didn't stop after he had displaced his weight. He raised his hand above, futilely trying to grab onto something, but alas, there was nothing, and soon, his wrist, hand, and then fingers disappeared into the floor.

The liquid stopped sloshing around, and from the outer boundary of the liquid pool, the stone started to solidify, and the cube pattern began to reappear.

But before the liquid could completely turn back to normal flooring, an air bubble rose to the top, soon a gurgle of them followed, and the entire liquid stone started to stir. Then breaking out from the viscous stone-turned-liquid came, a top of a sphere made from spinning air, sending out splashes of liquid.

The sphere of air rose from the liquid; the air spun so fast that it turned solid, and not a drop of liquid entered the sphere. Inside the sphere floated Quinn, his face set into stone, his lips pressed into a line, only his eyes glowed a deep shade of purple.

He looked down and jabbed a hand towards the liquid, and a blob of liquid stone floated out from the pool. Quinn looked ahead, and the air sphere flew forward outside the boundary of the liquid pool on the next tile (skipping six tiles that had turned to liquid.)

The sphere disappeared, putting him down on the floor, and the moment the tile depressed, the liquid turned solid and set off the next trap.

Two hands rose from the tile below, and ten cold fingers wrapped Quinn's ankles. Immediately multiple chains with hands at the end shot towards his hands once again gripped their stoney fingers around his wrist, forearms, elbows, and upper arms.

Purple eyes turned towards the ceiling to see a depressed ceiling tile while feeling the grips around his arms and legs turn firmer by the second and the arm chains pulling his arms apart — they weren't going to stop until his body was into parts or his arms were separate from his body.

Two giant, waist-level, circular blades appeared from the ground as two adjacent pathways revealed themselves, crossing below Quinn's feet for the circular blades with jagged saw teeth to pass through his body. The blades started to spin rapidly and began to move towards him from his sides.

Quinn now had his arms spread wide, with joints about to enter a pain stage. He blankly stared at the incoming circular blades. He tugged his right arm, and chains snapped before they could even groan, he looked to his other hand and once again jerked, and his arms were.

He didn't move from his spot — the path of the blades — and instead stared at the liquid blob that he had pulled from the liquid poll. A blob stilled, and a layer of ice covered it before the liquid was entirely encapsulated in ice.

After Quinn pocketed it, he started to pull off the hands clutching his body — all of them tried to clasp his hands, but Quinn threw all but one away that he pocketed.

Quinn looked down, and the hands gripping his ankles turned into goo. The blades were a foot away from him when Quinn stepped ahead to the next tile. The next tile suddenly rose in the form of a cuboidal column,

but before anything happened, it exploded into bits with a yellow light covering the blast.

Quinn watched the point-blank explosion behind his shield, and when the dust settled, a vortex of wind flew above the stump of the blasted pillar with chunks of debris trapped inside the vortex. He beckoned the vortex, and it dropped a handful of stone into his hand, which again froze into a block of ice that once again into his expanded pockets.

Quinn stepped over the crude stump onto the next tile.

A 3x3 cube tile area with Quinn standing in the middle disappeared and revealed a pitfall of around twenty feet with a bed of stone spikes waiting for someone to fall in give them the drink of blood they desired. Quinn glanced down; purple glowed in his eyes, and the entire twenty-foot pit became a twenty-foot long column of ice.

He stepped over to the next tile, and the entire room started to shake — hard enough to register high on the Richter Scale. Quinn's eye narrowed as his balance began to stagger, coming close to step on another tile or even fall on multiples of them at a time. A pulse of magic pumped into his body, and his physical attributes rose up on the charts, and he stood his ground, but even that wasn't enough as the room started to shake more and more, so Quinn did the logical thing and stepped forward.

The tile depressed a couple inches as they did, but the very next second, a column sprung up, pushing his lead leg handling his weight up and back. The earthquake and the sudden change of standing platform threw Quinn off balance.

Quinn's mouth twitched as his expression turned sour. A pillar of ice rose above the tile that jerked up and threw him off balance. He threw his arms forward, and two cords of empyrean snapped out of his palms, and the hardened tips at the end of the cords dug into the ice pillar. Quinn

grabbed the cord tightly and came to a jerking stop, leaning at a dangerous angle with the floor with his feet firmly planted on the earthquake tile.

He pulled himself up amidst all the shaking. The ice pillar melted away, and Quinn carefully jumped over the rising tile onto the next one so that he could stop the room from shaking. Quinn became vigilant the second the shaking stopped and began looking around.

Quinn frowned. Nothing happened.

He looked at his feet and blinked — the tile hadn't depressed — there wasn't a tile beneath his feet at all. He looked up, and the door was a few feet ahead of him. The realization struck him. Quinn turned back and saw the tiled area behind him. It was done; he had passed the trap zone.

The purple from his eyes faded away to stone grey, and the heavy heaving began. The primal emotion of fear, anger, and urgency that bubble up to survive the stone quicksand waned away.

"Holy magic," Quinn said between breathes, "I freaking flew! I can fly!"

He ignored his pumping heart and throbbing head and immersed himself in the memory of his first unaided flight.

He leaned against the exit tunnel wall and slipped down to the ground.

"Come on, me. You. . . you know better."

Time after time, he had reminded himself that balance between emotions, but in the heat of the moment, those thoughts of balance were pushed to the back seat. As he had sunk into the liquid stone — everything went black, and he couldn't even take in a breath — there was nothing but survival mode taking over.

"I'm tired," he voiced as his state went back to normal, and he stood back up. He teetered towards the dim light on the other side of the tunnel, his walk unhurried and weary, all the while bending his knees and keeping

his head down to avoid banging his head to the top of the tunnel — the people of that time were much shorter.

Quinn exited the tunnel, and immediately he knew that the vault had ended.

The previous three rooms had been rough, undecorated, purely functional, but in front of him was anything but. His feet stood on an ornate polished marble floor with intricate designs and patterns, showing off the geometrical art form.

The walls themselves into sculptures of the Ancient Roman era — people dressed in togas, naked people, babies, sex. . . centaurs, goblins, warriors with swords on horses, magicals working with cauldrons, architectural backgrounds reminiscent of that era. It had all the underlying characteristics — sculpting immortality, shining a light on divinity and magic, and propaganda reflecting in every individual piece.

The ceiling was a dome and the most bright thing in the room — the only colorful thing in the Architect's Vault. Murals on every single inch of the roof painted in stunning vibrancy — remarkable considering a millennium had passed since they were painted.

But what caught Quinn's attention was the enormous bronze statue of Stigward Gragg standing on a shallow pedestal, standing tall in the middle of the room.

Quinn walked to the statue and noticed two things on the pedestal base that stood out to him. Written in Latin were the Architect's name and short prose on him about who he was and what he had accomplished in his life.

". . . You who have shown aptitude are worthy to receive my legacy,"

Quinn finished with the last line aloud.

He looked up, and a wry smile marred his face. Just with one line, he

could tell how Architect was looking at him right now. It said aptitude instead of skill — it screamed, 'Whatever you went through was not an impressive feat, 'twas just a measure of the basic requirement to receive my much greater legacy.'

It screamed hubris. It screamed, 'I'm better than you.'

"Oh, get off your high horse," Quinn spat. "I'm taller than you."

The second thing on the pedestal was a familiar etched square, strikingly similar to the trap tiles he had just walked through. A sigh escaped him seeing the tile — he was feeling mentally fatigued, and if this was going to be sprung a final boss, he wanted no part of it.

He stared up and wondered aloud, "If I press this and you turn into a robot, then I'm going to blast your head off. . ."

Quinn pressed the square with his palm, and it indeed depressed an inch.

He hurriedly looked up, but the statue didn't move; instead, the sculptures along the walls came to life and started to move. Quinn amped up his magic in preparation for a blitz, but the sculptures simply cleared up a portion of the wall, revealing a tunnel.

Quinn sighed. He was sick of tunnels leading to different rooms. /With no other options, he walked through the tunnel, and when he exited, it was pitch black.

Quinn raised one of his hands to release a bubble beam of light orbs while his other hand rubbed both of his eyes, hoping that it would alleviate some fatigue. When he opened his eyes, all the tiredness went away like someone had slapped him without notice.

Spread in front of him were mountains!-mountains! of GOLD. Wherever his eyes went, he was greeted with shining gold, reflecting golden light onto his entire body. He squatted down and picked up a gold coin — it was a galleon, that much was clear from the GRINGOTTS written on the

coin, but the design on the minted coin was much different from the current version.

There were statues, jewellery, ornate frames gilded in gold, a treasure chest with more gold, and precious stones and gems. If there was something that could be molded from gold, then it could be found in the mountains.

"Finally," he said, "finally," he repeated, "a Vault is actually a vault." Time after time, he got into vaults, and at the ends, there would be something, but there was never a treasure — he had long become desensitized to the word vault.

"My dream can finally come true," Quinn said and ran into the mountain of gold and started. . . swimming. His dreams of swimming in a pool of gold had been blown up, and now was he was swimming in a mountain of gold.

"I am rich!" he shouted. "I don't have to work another day of my life! Wastrel life, here I come!" It was truly an amount that Quinn wouldn't need to work in a day in his life, and he would still have enough. It was an amount sizeable enough for even a West.

After getting his fill of sliding down on the mountains, Quinn started to wander around in the sizeable room and came upon a row of bookshelves with old tomes preserved with magic. He took out a book and cracked open the spine.

His eyes read across the Latin writing; soon, he had sat down on a golden chair in the gold flooded vault, reading through the pages.

"Genius! Genius!" Quinn shouted, his voice echoing in the vault. It had taken a single book for Quinn to label Stigweard Gragg a genius.

"Transmutation and transfiguration properties of so many metal and non-metal, even alchemic-materials. . . this is a treasure!"

He couldn't put it into words, but having extensive notes on how different materials reacted with magic was an asset whose value in some circles would be greater than the mountain of gold sitting behind him, and Quinn would gladly be part of those circles.

Quinn had encyclopaedias of similar information; it had been a thousand years after all — but none of the books were as extensive and as depthful as the one in his hands.

"Stigweard Gragg isn't an architect," Quinn shook his head, no that was underplaying the man's work. "Stigweard Gragg is a Master of magic!"

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Quinn West - MC - Now, very-very rich. . . seriously rich. A sizeable amount richer than before, even with the numerous royalties piling up in a bank vault in Basel, Switzerland.

FictionOnlyReader - Author - I wanted to do this for such a long time. A vault that's actually a vault.

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If you have any ideas regarding the magic you want to see in this fiction or want to offer some ideas regarding the progression. Move onto the DISCORD Server and blast those ideas.

The link is in the synopsis!

249. Chapter 249: DA Files:

Closing Page

If you want to read ahead of the posting schedule then head over to my Patreón.

All the chapters would still be posted here, but you can support me with a donation and get chapters earlier than usual as a bonus.

Link in the Bio/Profile

Quinn stared at the talking crowd of DA members with a hint of a smile.

He saw them laughing and chatting with each other; the group's vibe had become merrier ever since Umbridge's leave from Hogwarts.

Dumbledore's entry as the new Defense Against Dark Arts had pumped a new life into the students, and DA members who had been ahead of the curve because of their secretly nightly adventures were reveling in the knowledge they knew and could apply before Dumbledore would introduce it. Moreover, there was no need for them to have Marcus breathing down their necks, whispering stringent secrecy rules in their ears.

He sighed. Yes, there was no need to maintain secrecy. With Umbridge gone, DA could now go from its situational secret society status to simply an unofficial student club.

He felt it was the right time. Quinn took out his pocket watch — there was about half an hour before the group would usually disperse for the night. He chuckled; indeed, it was time.

"Everyone," Quinn said, snapping his pocket watch close, "if I can have your attention for a moment, I'd like to discuss something important with all of you."

His words, as they usually did, grabbed everyone's attention.

"I have an announcement to make," he said. "Today will be my last day here at DA," there were audible gasps in the crowd. "The past few months were memorable and definitely one of the highlights of this year and even my time at Hogwarts till now, and I'd like to thank you for the amazing time," he turned his eye over the entire group gathering around him, "but after today, I'll no longer be attending these meets. That's all I had to say, once again, thank you. . ."

The moment his mouth closed, the discordant chorus of questions attacked his ears, causing him to close his eyes for a moment as he raised

his hand.

"One moment at a time, please," he opened his eyes and pointed at Marcus.

Marcus took the cue and spoke up, "Why?! Is there a problem? Because we can talk about it and fix it; tell us, we will fix it now."

"Oh boy," said Quinn, a chuckle in voice, "there isn't any problem with DA; the system that we have built here is exemplary, but I don't think there's a need for DA anymore, and that's why I think it's time for at least me to exit."

There were a lot of frowns and upward slanting brows, but the previous raucous of noise was absent. They understood what he was talking about.

"You see it, right? Now that Umbridge's gone, we don't have to sneak around at nights like thieves just so that we can learn some magic. Yet week after week, we meet just at night, and meeting after meeting, we trim minutes on time before curfew to get back to our dorms. It just doesn't make sense anymore for us to behave this way."

Ivy said, "Do you. . . not like this anymore?"

"Nothing like that. It couldn't be farther than that; I enjoy my time here and think all of you're amazing individuals, but I think that the time has arrived for me to exit this group," Quinn tucked his hands behind his back. "Moreover, all of you don't need me anymore. I have already taught you the three basic principles — Knowledge, Intent, and Emotion — and all of you have gained much practice of using these over the months; all you need to do is follow what you've been doing and keep learning what you want."

DA members learned what everyone was learning, which was fine, for it was the necessity of the time, but now that the standard academia was back on track, it was time for individuals to focus their extra time on

things they wanted to learn.

"If all of you desire, you can continue to learn as a group. In no way, I'm saying that DA needs to disband; no, that would be wasting an amazing resource," he said. "For instance, if someone wants to learn certain magic, then they can ask around in the DA community if someone can help them learn the spell, which we have been doing — or if someone would like to learn it along with them so that you can compare your experiences and gain additional gains from the other's mistake."

His words didn't seem to lessen the unease the group was feeling. They had become comfortable in their current environment, and Quinn had just pulled the safety blanket, leaving them out in the cold.

"Yes, Hermione," said Quinn, looking at the raised hand, "please go ahead."

Quinn had said that he was leaving DA, so it made her wonder, "If we ask you to teach us something, will you?"

"If I'm free, of course, I'd be more than happy to help out with magic. I would like to make something — let me rephrase something I said earlier — I'm not leaving DA; I'm simply stepping down as an active member. Of course, that's only if you'd accept a passive DA member."

"We accept," Ivy said instantly, "you will always be a DA member." And many others nodded and murmured in acknowledgment. The Golden Squad were the founding member of DA, the house representatives were leaders, and Quinn, the teacher, was the group's backbone — DA couldn't be mentioned without a mention of Quinn in every chapter of the DA annals.

Quinn nodded politely with an upturned face. "That's delightful to hear," he said. "Well, there's still some time before we end for today. Is there something someone would like to ask, doubts you want to clear — or we

can sit down and talk if that's what you'd like?"

"I want to duel you!"

All eyes turned to the assertive voice, and there stood Harry Potter in the challenger's spot. Everyone turned their eyes back to Quinn, straining their ears and shushing others to be quiet. In all DA sessions, Quinn had only once practiced with Neville, but other than that, he hadn't actively used magic other than demonstration, much less duel.

"What brought this on?" asked Quinn.

Harry crossed his arms over his chest as he said, "I know I learned a lot, but I want to see if I actually improved."

Quinn squinted, his eyes lit with an inner twinkle as he tilted his head, contemplating how to respond. He nodded, "Alright, that's as good as any measure of improvement. Let's have it — the duel."

The group formed a wide circle as a stage with wands out in everyone's hands for protection as they had been taught — if you were near any sort of spell activity, it was common sense to have your wand out.

"Alright, Harry Potter. How do you want to do this?" Quinn took out his fake wand and held it with hands behind his back.

"Standard rules," Harry said, pulling his sleeves up, "the one who gets disarmed or stunned first wins."

"Are you sure? We can make it the best of three if you want."

Harry's eyes narrowed. He stuck his chin up and shook his head. "No, one or nothing will do."

"You said it," Quinn looked to the crowd and called, "Astoria, if you'd toss a coin or something to start us off."

Astoria beamed and shuffled to the center of the stage between Harry, who held his wand in front of him, while on the opposite side, Quinn still had his behind his back.

"Ready?" she asked and held out a silver sickle in her and her wand in another, which raised my brows. She looked at both of them, and then with a flourish of her wand, the coin flew up.

Astoria ran back to the crowd as Harry and Quinn stared at each other — one was smiling while the other severely gazed. A second passed, then two. . . and the staring contest passed ten clicks. . .

Quinn and Harry turned to look up and squinted their eyes to see the glimpse of a floating sickle. They turned to Astoria, who was swaying in mischief and raised their hands. Astoria stuck out her tongue, and with a wave of her wand, the sickle stopped hovering and dropped.

The coin passed through Harry and Quinn's sight, rotating as it passed by and towards the floor. Harry gripped his wand and stretched his ears, and then the tinge of the coin hitting the floor came. Harry lunged forward with his forefoot and waved a stunner to zap towards Quinn.

Quinn released his wand hand's wrist from his other hand, and with a shove of his shoulder and the flick of the wrist, a shield blocked the stunner. He didn't stop, and with his wand hand rising up with the momentum, he worked his wrist to shoot a blue pellet-sized orb — not towards Harry but towards the floor.

The silver sickle that had dropped from a ridiculous height had just reached the peak of its bounce, rotating on two different axes, was suddenly hit by the blue, glowing magic pellet on the (current) lower face and shot up because of the physical push from the spell.

Like launching a throwing knife, Quinn cocked his hand above his shoulder and flung his wand arm forward, and shot a yellow pellet towards the coin. The yellow light pellet enveloped the rotating coin, which launched it towards Harry at a blinding speed.

The coin was met by a shield cast by Harry in the two spell worths of

time and stood confident behind them. He raised his wand to cast his next spell, but his hand halted when he saw another yellow pellet crash from Quinn crash into the coin.

He dropped his eye to the coin, and they bulged when he saw a rapidly spinning coin pushing against his shield, distorting it inwards as if trying to tear through it. He jumped when another yellow pellet enveloped the coin in yet another burst of yellow light, and his shield bulged deeper inside and rippled at three-sixty rpm (ripples per minute.)

Then without further warning, like a water balloon popping, Harry's shield tore, and the glowing coin stuck him square in the chest.

"Ugh," Harry groaned as his hand went to his chest, feeling the dull pain — did the coin crack a rib?

"Come on, Potter," said Quinn, unhurriedly walking across the stage, "I know my magic is interesting, but don't stand there admiring it during a duel."

Quinn looked to his left, raised his free hand, and curled his finger back and forth in the beckoning finger sign. On the receiving end, Eddie cracked his neck before stepping onto the stage.

"You should know better," said Eddie, twirling his wand. "Why waste time with Potter when you know that I'm the only one who's able to take you out."

"Oh really?" Quinn smirked. "And when was the last time you supposedly took me out?"

"Oh, you know. . . right now!" An electric arc zapped out of the tip of Eddie's wand — him aiming to take Quinn out with the support of the fabled element of surprise.

Quinn chuckled as he lazily waved, and the electric arc fizzled out of all its crackling juice.

"Come on, Carmichael, that was weak. Where did that punch go? Or does it only come it with repeated loosing?"

Eddie showed no reaction other than peering eyes — "BOMBARDA!" — he chanted suddenly and sent the yellowish-orange explosion spell barreling towards Quinn, who pulled up a specific spell more suitable for non-physical attacks that took the heavy brunt of Eddie's cannon blast. He turned to Harry, who was no longer clutching his chest and was now following them with their eyes.

"What are you doing, Harry?" Quinn swiped to create a spinning air burst that crumbled Eddie's conjured rock spikes.

Harry looked at Quinn with confusion flashing in his eyes: "What?"

"You asked for standard rules, remember? You're neither knocked out nor disarmed, so why are —" Quinn shot a stunner towards Harry, which he blocked startled — "you standing there like a statue and not dueling."

"But—"

Eddie cut him off and shouted, "Less chatter, Potter, if all you're going to do is daydream in between a duel, then the at least you can do is to buzz in his ear like a housefly." He finished with a fully charged reductor towards Quinn's feet, who had to receive it into a shield for the onlooker's safety.

Harry gritted his teeth, gouged a chunk of the floor below his wand tip, set it ablaze in white fire, and hurled it towards Quinn.

Quinn blocked a disarm from Eddie — "Now that's more like it." — turned to Harry's fiery ball of rock and redirected it towards Eddie — "Thanks for the help," he said.

Eddie, who had already had another reductor on his tongue, bit it down and cast a shield, and even then was pushed back a couple steps due to the brute force of the rock, not to mention the white fire came near

melting his shield.

"Hermione!" The girl jolted at Quinn's call. "Get in here!"

"W-What?"

"These two are useless. Come on and show that you're the one who most improved."

Hermione turned unsure eyes to both Harry and Eddie and saw them unleashing magic after magic towards Quinn, trying their best to take his head off — This was useless? she thought.

She stepped out from the crowd and immediately felt her heart jump out of her throat when a disarming spell came galloping towards her. She eeked, but her hand moved instinctively and blocked the spell.

"Good, now get to work," she heard Quinn speak before he pulled up a giant block of the floor as a shield before turning it into wolves that went howling towards Eddie.

The DA crowd watched as three people dueled against a solo Quinn, who continuously switched between attack, defense, and the occasional parry. It was a showcase of skill — people with knowing eyes could tell that Quinn was pushing the three while keeping them in the running; there were many opportunities, but Quinn would always turn away and target another.

"Nott, step in!"

Everyone gasped as Quinn called for another. Everyone looked at Nott, who froze for a second before stepping out from behind a couple people into the ring and began taking part in the five-person play of flying spells.

"Hannah, it's time. Come on."

Hannah Abbott fidgeted onto her way into the ring, and her output wasn't what Quinn was expecting when compared to what he had seen in

practice, so not half a minute later, he called again.

"Luna, let's see if you actually listen to me."

Luna shrugged, glided into the ring, and started to aim all of her spells towards. . . Quinn's legs — making him sweat a little as six people that Quinn was trying to give a chance to disarm or knock him while not trying to disarm or knock them out — Luna strictly aiming for his legs (which he did teach her. . . technically) was a bit worrying.

But it was only worrying a bit. "Diggory," he said, "do you want to see if you can win with all this help?"

And so joined the Headboy and began the seven verses one dance. Quinn, the masterful conductor, lead the seven unknowing instrumentalists in a masterful orchestra. It was a beautiful show of skillful magic — matching attacks with specific defenses, timing attacks with just enough power to keep them out of offense while he took care of the others, and playing with some showboating with some parrying.

"Alright, time to end this," Quinn said after dueling with the seven people.

He turned to Hannah and shot a disarming spell, timing it perfectly to hit her just when she pulled down her shield. Quinn turned to parry a glowing red stunner from Eddie, but this time instead of sending it up, he sent it towards Nott, who felt the brunt of some heavy magic and dropped like a sack of potatoes. His next option was Eddie himself, who he decided takeout with a heavier stunner than Eddie's own and sent him flying back onto the ground.

Now remained Luna, Cedric, Harry, and Hermione.

Quinn turned to Harry and blew out a little puff of air towards Harry, who suddenly felt like he was standing in a storm. Harry's hands went up against the wind, and he never saw the stunner coming. Quinn turned to

Hermione and shot his first depulso of the day — at her feet — which knocked off her feet with only her arms saving her face from kissing the floor — she too never saw the disarming spell coming.

"Diggory, sorry, but you're next," said Quinn grinning, "Luna's my best friend, so she can't go before everyone else."

"Eddie went before," said Cedric — "BOMBARDA MAXIMA!"

Quinn pulled a shield against that, and Luna's full-body bind.

"He's used to it," said Quinn and ripped a spell that emulated punches and assaulted Cedric's joints, making him fall with a grunt and then deflected another one of Luna's full-body bind to finish him.

In the ring, Quinn and Luna remained. They both watched each other.

Luna shrugged and put her wand into her robe, and walked and stood beside Marcus.

"Well, forfeit is always a legit option," said Quinn, shrugging.

Clap! Clap! Clap!

Quinn turned and saw Tracey clapping and then Daphne; soon after, everyone was clapping. Quinn did an exaggerated bow and then faced a lot of questions asking him to teach them that — especially young ones like Dennis Creevey.

When the session came to an end, and everyone was moving out, Quinn wrapped around Astoria's shoulder.

"What?" she asked, snuggling in a bit.

Quinn took out the sickle she had tossed and placed it in her hand, "Sorry about the sickle, it sort of bent."

Astoria stared at the coin, and it was indeed bent into a crumpled piece of metal. "I would like to be paid back," she said.

A light shined in Quinn's eyes, and he nodded. He wrapped his bigger hand, wrapping Astoria's smaller hand with the bent sickle completely,

and blew on it.

"What's that supposed to do?" she asked.

Quinn winked at her as he removed his hand. "I have paid my debt," he smiled, removed his hand from her shoulder, and walked ahead to join her sister.

Astoria tilted her head in confusion before looking at her hand. She opened her palm, and her mouth opened up like a gaping fish — there was a gold galleon sitting there with no signs of the useless sickle.

"How did you do that?! Also, do you want me to toss more sickles?

Because I will do it if this is what I get!"

.

Quinn West - MC - Goodbye, DA.

FictionOnlyReader - Author - No chapter tomorrow, as it is New Years, and I'd be spending the day sleeping for the entire day. And I'll jump on the new year countdown, so I'm not on earth when the year changes. I urge that all of you do the same.

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If you have any ideas regarding the magic you want to see in this fiction or want to offer some ideas regarding the progression. Move onto the DISCORD Server and blast those ideas.

The link is in the synopsis!

250. Chapter 250: The End-Of-

Year Examination

If you want to read ahead of the posting schedule then head over to my Patreón.

All the chapters would still be posted here, but you can support me with a donation and get chapters earlier than usual as a bonus.

Link in the Bio/Profile

The winters began to wane, with the warm days rising and the young year turning older by the months, entering the spring of its time. On another splendid day, the Ravenclaw Trio sat under a pre-bloom beech tree on the edge of the lake, where they sat under the warm sun to study for the incoming end-of-the-year examinations, where they stood less chance of being disturbed by others wanting to gain help from Quinn. The castle grounds were gleaming in the sunlight as though freshly painted; the cloudless sky smiled at itself in the smoothly sparkling lake, the satin-green lawns occasionally rippled in a gentle breeze. They spread their books out in the shade of the tree and sat down while Quinn talked Eddie and Marcus through concepts that they wanted clarification on. "Ugh," Eddie tossed his notes down before leaning back onto the grass, "I don't suppose Hogwarts is going to hit by a meteoroid, and the examinations get cancelled."

Quinn chuckled as he solved a problem for Marcus, "I can safely guess that's not going to be the case, and why are you complaining," he passed the notebook to Marcus, "you scored pretty good on my mock test — that just means you're going to do better than that on the real ones."

Eddie waved his tucked-up legs left and right impatiently. He didn't want the exams to cancel just to arrive sooner so that he could blaze through them. It was stressful for him (and any Ravenclaw) to spend time in the tense Ravenclaw dorms where everyone had developed an irritating habit of interrogating people about their study habits.

'Just flipping study and stop annoying me!' he had thought.

"You should write more," Marcus said, turning a page of Advanced Transfiguration Pt. 1 and peering at a series of diagrams showing an owl turning into a pair of opera glasses. "If your dad doesn't think your scores are enough, he might not allow you to go to the summer camp — so try

to improve your writing speed, you wouldn't want to lose marks because you couldn't write an answer you knew."

Eddie groaned as he pulled his torso up back from the ground. He placed a hardback book on his lap, slammed a parchment on it, and sent his quill running. If he didn't score good (for a Ravenclaw), his Pops wasn't going to let him attend a Quidditch camp that he had been invited to in the coming summer.

With the end-of-the-year examination just on the horizon, their teachers were no longer setting them homework; lessons were devoted to reviewing those topics their teachers thought most likely to come up in the exams.

"Griselda Marchbanks is going to be making rounds this time," Quinn said, quoting information from his contacts in the Head of Magical Education Department. "She's ancient — she took my grandfather's NEWTs, and I believe that she was there for Dumbledore's testing as well."

"Now that's one old witch," said Eddie.

"I heard that she's really strict," said Marcus, "apparently if you try to waddle your way through a question in the practicals, she gives a straight zero — either you know it or you don't."

"Nothing to do with us," Edie shrugged, making a wireframe of the steps required to brew a skin re-growth potion, "she's not going to be taking ours — poor fifth and seventh-year chumps," he cackled.

Marcus looked up from his notes to Quinn. "You're going to be busy for a while now. You volunteered what? For the entire two-week OWL process."

Quinn nodded, "I don't have much going, so it's fine." The vault was over, and it wasn't like he needed to study for exams, so when Flitwick asked

him to volunteer, he agreed and was now in charge of directing the OWL students to their practicals.

The weeks leading to the OWLs were like a volcano threatening to burst with people trying to cram more stuff in their minds, trying to find resources on the prevailing black market for miraculous remedies to keep up at night, concentration, rote abilities, and the myriads that the con artists (mostly Ravenclaws) were trying to sell to the rest of the school. When the time finally arrived, the examination season was spread across two weeks like it usually was every year, with the theory exams in the morning and practicals in the afternoons.

Because of his responsibilities, Quinn gave his practicals earlier in the morning, before he sat for his theoretical papers with the rest of his peers and classmates so that he could be free for the two-week OWL process. Quinn stood in a corridor with a clipboard in hand — there were four panels of examiners in four different rooms who would first take up would take up OWL aspirants just after lunch while the NEWT students would go before dinner.

For the first day of the exams, the fifth-year students were scheduled for Charms on the first Monday morning. The OWL students were sorted randomly into four classrooms working as waiting areas — a waiting classroom per panel.

"Alright," Quinn tapped a pen on the sheets on the clipboard, "everything seems to be in order. . . and we're good to go."

He walked to the other end of the corridor, pushed open the first examiner's panel door, and came across an amusing conversation.

"Little Albus. . ." Quinn's ears perked up — Little Albus? Not something he or anyone in this school would expect to hear in a million ears. The woman to call the 100+-year-old headmaster with the 'little' prefix was

Griselda Marchbanks, the Head of Magical Education Department and an ancient woman of over 200 years of age — it made sense that she would call Albus Dumbledore as Little Albus.

She was a tiny, stooped woman with a face so lined it looked as though it had been draped in cobwebs, but she spoke louder than most loud people did despite a slight tremble in her aged voice.

". . . I thought Cornelius would not stop before kicking you out of Hogwarts; he was never smart — I remember talking to him during his NEWTs; all he did was blabber on and on without doing what I asked him. You should thank your stars that Dolores went ahead and threw her brain into the garbage — not that it would help, it was pitifully tiny to begin with, it would not have helped her even if she used it.

Good thing they sent her off to Azkaban — good riddance!"

The woman didn't mince her words.

"Let the past be the past," said Dumbledore, his tone the usual, not at all reflecting the fact that the Minister was about to be voted out of his position and a prominent Ministry executive was shipped to Azkaban in a massive scandal. "It's time for the younger generation to take the stage — us old fellows can only look from the side and see them bask in the glory and be happy in the fact that we might have something to do with it."

Old Marchbanks turned up her nose and huffed, "Who are you calling old? Your joints must have turned rusty, but I am still quite spry."

"Of course," Dumbledore could only smile.

Quinn cleared his throat, making his presence known to the other two.

"Madam Marchbanks, if you're ready, everything from our side is ready, and we can start sending the students in."

"Who are you?" said Marchbanks, loudly.

"My name's Quinn West."

"Mr. West, here is a sixth-year Prefect," said Dumbledore, "he has volunteered today to be a liaison for the students and the examiners."

Quinn stepped into the empty classroom and walked to Marchbanks' table. "I'll be sending in the students when you're ready," he took a sheet from the clipboard and laid it on the table, and with a tap of his fake wand, the single sheet turned into a stack.

"The top page is the list of students you'll be seeing today," he pushed the sheet aside, revealing a marking schematics with Abbot, Hannah written in the names' field. "You are to fill your gradings and remarks on these—"

"Yes, yes, I know, I know, I have done it a countless number of times," Marchbanks waved impatiently. She narrowed her eyes at Quinn, her wrinkles deepening. "West. . . West. . . West. . . Hmm, Quinn West! Yes, I remember you from last year! Your scores were excellent; I had a pleasure reading your papers — a pity I couldn't be here to take your practicals."

"Thank you, Madam Marchbanks," said Quinn, giving a short, polite bow.

"Well then, I won't take up any more of your time; you have a long day ahead of you," Dumbledore said.

"Can you not sit beside me while I go through this? We could catch up," asked Marchbanks.

"While I'd love to do that, I don't think the students would want to have their headmaster in the room as they give their practicals," said Dumbledore.

"You are no fun," Marchbanks said before pulling up the list.

"Please take care of Madam Marchbanks," Dumbledore said to Quinn, who nodded.

"Alright, send in the cavalry," said Marchbanks, pulling out a flask from her purse and setting it next to a cup and saucer before pouring herself a

steaming serving of tea.

"Yes, first is Hannah Abbot," said Quinn, took out another sheet from his clipboard, and set it in front of her.

Marchbanks put down her cup before it reached her lips and picked up the sheet. "What is this?" she asked. The sheet had three names on it — Hannab Abbot, Susan Bones, and Terry Boot — and under every name was a list of charms.

"The charms under the names are what the student is good at."

Marchbanks squinted her eyes at the sheet. "But these charms aren't from the fifth-year curriculum."

"No they aren't. If a student performs the fifth-year charms well and you'd like to test them for bonus points, you can refer to that list. The students which I'll be providing you are the ones who told me about their out-of-curriculum specialties."

The students who Quinn listed were basically DA members that Quinn as a fellow member, was trying to get them better grades. He was confident that if Marchbanks took his offering, all DA members would gain bonus points because he had seen them cast the spells.

"Oh my, I see. . . certainly, if these children are able to perform their curriculum taught spells, then I will give them chances for bonus points."

"That's great. I'm sure they would be thrilled."

"Do you have these lists for other subjects too?"

"Yes, I do; I can provide you with the three casting subjects — Charms, Transfiguration, and DADA."

"Then I'll like to receive those as well."

"You got it."

Quinn then walked to the rest of the panel rooms and repeated the same conversation with the sweetest old people he had met — they weren't as

old as Marchbanks, but they did match Dumbledore in age and were joyous about receiving the spell list.

After ensuring that the panelists were all ready, he walked into the waiting rooms, started calling students, and so began the practical portion of OWLs.

"Alright, let's see, who's next," Quinn said to himself after he entered the room. "Goldstein, Goyle, Granger, and Greengrass," he read before calling out, "Anthony Goldstein, Gregory Goyle, Hermione Granger, and Daphne Greengrass."

The four people stepped out from their respective groups and walked out of the room, their gait stiff and robotic. They looked at him like baby ducks, like they didn't know what to do.

"All of you realize that OWLs are the same as the rest of your examinations; the only difference is that the examiner is external," said Quinn as they walked to their respective panels.

"Are they strict? What are they asking? Do they have our theory papers? Are they, by chance, already graded? What are their moods like?"

Hermione spouted questions like a locomotive train did smoke.

Quinn chuckled and stealthily cast calming magic. "It's fine; they are cozy and pleasant, so don't worry about their moods. Perform well, and they will give you a chance for bonus points."

He watched as all four gradually calmed down a level, his magic doing its work, though there was still some definite stiffness in their bodies.

One by one, he led them to different panel rooms — Anthony Goldstein went first, then Gregory Goyle, and then Hermione Granger.

"Will she be fine?" Daphne asked, looking at Hermione entering the room.

She was rapid spouting chants under her breath.

"I think she'll be fine — she got a hundred and twelve percent on a test,"

said Quinn. He looked down at Daphne, and it seemed that his magic couldn't overcome the pre-exam jitters, so he turned to the only alternative he could think of.

Daphne felt a hand slip into hers, and it had its intended effects.

"You'll be fine," said Quinn, "we went over everything that could ever come up in that room. You have a fantastic theory base and extensive practical experience from DA. You'll breeze through it with flying colors."

"You think so?" she asked, leaning a bit.

"Absolutely."

They reached outside Marchbanks' door, and Quinn turned to face Daphne.

"What are the three attributes of focus?" he asked.

"Knowledge, Intent, and Emotion."

"You have all of it, and that's all you will ever need. Now go in and knock the old lady's dentures out."

Daphne smiled and giggled behind her hand. She nodded, straightened herself up, and knocked on the door before opening it.

"Daphne Greengrass?" Marchbanks' voice came from inside. "Are you Sophie's daughter? You are, aren't you? Yes, I can see it. Come in, come in, tell me, how is your mother doing these days? I have not seen her in a while. Do you want a biscuit?"

The end of the year had begun.

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Quinn West - MC - Perfect Prefect.

Daphne Greengrass - Nervous - Did well in her practicals.

Griselda Marchbanks - Magical Education Department - Oh, Albus! Look at you, gotten so old.

FictionOnlyReader - Author - 2022 is here, peeps. Let's make the most of

it. Post your new-year resolutions in the reviews.

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If you have any ideas regarding the magic you want to see in this fiction or want to offer some ideas regarding the progression. Move onto the DISCORD Server and blast those ideas.

The link is in the bio!

251. Chapter 251: The Event On

The Horizon

If you want to read ahead of the posting schedule then head over to my Patreón.

All the chapters would still be posted here, but you can support me with a donation and get chapters earlier than usual as a bonus.

Link in the Bio/Profile

The evening moon rose in the blue sky, ushering in the time of night, tugging the cover off from over the arrays of stars, revealing all the constellations that peered down on the mortals of the world. But in a clearing by the woods, away from the excitement of the city — bright flashing lightbulbs strobing all around like a disco ball in an eighties nightclub, ushering a different sort of zest and zeal.

A gigantic multi-colored sign lined with bulky tinted lightbulbs hung on two beams under which people walked past from a put-up stall with bored attendants talking to each other while stamping tickets to a cityside carnival.

People with families, friends, or their lovers on dates entered the beat-down grounds, occasionally housing the visiting carnivals and concerts.

The music climbed louder, recorded clown laughter cackled through speakers, and the melodies of children's joy as some ran around with carnival food in hand while others rode on the chugging motor powering

the rides.

Outside the raucous circus establishment, near a growth of trees that cast ghastly shadows under the weightless moonlight, space itself twisted and turned like being sucked through a tube before the one by one, the fabric of space spat out people dressed in black robes with air popping loudly, but only to be drowned out by the loud circus music.

In a few seconds, twenty people stood blending in the shadows, all looking at the inviting put-together fairgrounds of wood and metal with life thrumming with vigor.

"I can almost taste it," said the woman with thick, shining dark hair, long eyelashes, and heavily hooded eyes, "the joy, the delight, ah, it's almost palpitating," she stuck out tongue as if wanting to taste the emotions.

Bellatrix Lestrange's companions turned their eyes hidden beneath their masked faces to the woman, many wondering how the woman could descend further into madness; she had been twisted as writhing horrors behind her once great beauty — but that was Azkaban for you, it never failed to leave its taint on its guests, and Bellatrix had stayed long enough to call it her home.

She cackled, her body shivered, and her shoulder involuntary twitched as she turned to a robed matchstick figure standing in the middle of the groups, a hood covering the bowed head that sat upon a slouched back.

"Rivers!" Bellatrix called as she hopped to him like a schoolgirl. "So what do you have planned today? Tell meee~! I. Am. So. Looking. To. Having. Some. Fun. Tonight!"

Rivers looked at the crazy woman swaying her waist in front of him as her curls bounced from shoulder to shoulder. How had it come to this?

How was he roped into this?

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o - o - (Flashback) - o - o

Rivers had heard tales about Azkaban and its notorious jailers, but never could he have realized that hallowed eyes and depressed voices couldn't even scratch the surface of the realities of the most harrowing prison on living lands.

Being imprisoned in a shoddy excuse of a room — something that even by the most lowest of the standards couldn't be called a jail room. Floors and walls seeping with moisture from the surrounding sea kept the cell uncomfortably wet all around the year; the days and days he had spent trapped not being able to find a dry spot to rest with the crazy screams, crying, and the woman's laughter ringing in his ears had driven him longing for the simple bed back home — he would even beg for the cold wood floor, or anything as long as it was dry.

Then there was the chilling abrasive air coming from the barred window that scraped the skin, leaving it cold and raw. He and the prisoners were given an old matty blanket with a thick weave that did a poor job of keeping anyone warm — but that was a negligible problem when the only cover he had gotten wet like everything else.

The food was always cold mush that had left his teeth without exercise for years, and the water was limited, hastily thrown down their gullet by the Aurors who were always in a hurry to get out of the Dementor's sight that always stared at them from under their robes as if the Aurors were fresh, juicy prey.

No one talked in Azkaban. There was plenty of screaming, crying (and the woman's laughter) but never any talking.

Rivers hadn't minded it when he had newly arrived, but as the days passed by and the Dementors gathered around in his cell for a mint meal

every day for weeks, he hoped someone would tell him that there was a way to escape the daily nightmare, but no one spoke a word — even after he called and cried for someone, anyone — no one spoke — not even an "It's no use," that he had read in the books.

Rivers had soon come to realize that in Azkaban, there was no hiding from the Dementors. As long one stayed in the fortress, they were nothing more than feeding beds for the hooded monstrosities.

As long as they stayed.

He couldn't lie if he hadn't thought of breaking out, but those mentations were squashed by his own hard logic. He wasn't a magical savant; neither he possessed a crew of minions for a breakout, nor could he assemble one — the people had long lost hope; he lacked leverage that would make the Aurors for him.

In short, there was no way out for him.

'Without help,' Rivers thought bitterly, 'I can't get out of here.'

Then the walls of hell broke open, and his face was hit by cold rain and windy gusts after years. He was so thirsty that he stuck out his tongue and let the raindrops hit his tongue — it felt heavenly.

It must be a dream, he had thought. But then he realized why the damned woman had been laughing for so long.

Before his mental faculties could catch up, he was dragged out of his cell.

They, whoever they were, didn't technically drag him out; they didn't even touch him — magic lifted him off from the ground, and he was flown through what he inferred as corridors, he had only vaguely seen them only once when he was brought in, but at that time, he was taken by the sight of the doomed prisoners without light in their eyes.

Soon he was out of the fortress, just like that. He was out of the prison; he had spun his brain into hopelessness by thinking on how to escape —

but here he was, seeing the moon without the rusted black iron bars in his way.

'It's raining,' he thought, but the shower wasn't falling on him — it was perfect.

"Rivers Lock."

For a second, there was no reaction from Rivers; it had after all been so long that he had been called by his name — he was always Prisoner — no guard had called him by his name, he doubted they even knew about it.

"Rivers Lock."

Rivers finally weakly lifted his thin neck up and fronted his gaunt face to the caller. In the weak light of the pouring and thundering rain, Rivers couldn't see the face; all he could see was a short and thin man dressed in heavy robes.

"It's nice to finally meet you after so long," said the man, "though I wished it would've been in better circumstances," Rivers could feel the man's eyes looking all over him, "hmm, your condition doesn't seem to be great," and he said it like it was surprising

How dare this man say that and have the nerve to be surprised, he thought. Rivers was sure this man was some sort of pampered imbecile who hadn't tasted a day of hardship.

Rivers growled at the man, but all that came out was a frail groan from his unused voice box, and his neck couldn't keep his head up, and it fell back down.

The man chuckled humourlessly, "It seems you have some vigor left in you. Good, that's good. Well, that aside, we are here to break out some friends, and I thought it would be appropriate if we took you with us, because without some help, there's no getting off this island without

dying in the sea," there was a chuckle, "and it was sort of my fault that you ended up here."

Rivers painfully cranked his neck up: "What?"

"Hmm? You don't recognize me?" the man crouched down and pulled off his hood to reveal a thin but healthy face.

Rivers' blank eyes stared at the face; it took a few seconds for his muddled mind to pull up a memory. It was one of a half-torn, stained, wanted poster he had seen stuck on a pub wall, and on it was a chubby man, who sweated as his mugshot was captured.

The man in front of him was nothing like that, but his brain still brought up the memory, and even in his current state, Rivers trusted his mind, and another blink and look at the man's face, his pupils shrunk in recognition.

"You-you. . . are. . . P-Pettigrew. . . Peter Pettigrew!"

Peter flatly smiled, "Glad you recognized me. We have only conversed once through my sole letter to you, but that one time has led us to meet here again."

"You!" Rivers hoarse voice raged. "You are the reason I-I. . ." he fumed, anger fueling his weak body.

"That would be incorrect," said Peter, "I simply provided you information; it was your decision to act on it. Blaming me won't take away from your foolish choices. But let's put that behind us, cherish the present, and look forward to a bright present."

Peter's voice was so miserably flat that all his word sounded unmotivated and thus totally false. Rivers was left without words — there wasn't anything he could say; he was a man with a broken body, while Peter Pettigrew was a man who had seemingly just broken Azkaban.

"Now, I would like to meet my Master," said Peter. "I'm sure you had

heard of him. . . he goes by the name. . ."

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And that's how Rivers Lock ended up banking up with the Death Eaters.

He went from the leader of Novellus Accionites to a lower-middle circle member of the Dark Lord's Death Eaters.

For the first time in his life, he had been bound, his freedom chained. He was below the upper and inner circle members, any of them could order him around, and he couldn't refuse — not if he wanted to face the wrath of some individuals who wouldn't think for a second before either torturing or straight out killing him.

Then there was the Dark Lord, who would talk to him for hours about his work with Novellus Accionites. Rivers hoped to smooth talk to the Dark Lord, hoping to get into the good graces, but that went nowhere. The Dark Lord would call him to ask questions, and if he tried to deviate to build some relationship, the Dark Lord would put the conversation right on track.

It didn't help that the man was a Master Legilemens, and there was nothing he could hide. Rivers wouldn't even know that his mind was being read without his knowledge, but he did doubt that such was the case.

Finally, there was Peter Pettigrew, his handler in the Death Eater organization. He served the Dark Lord under Peter and was essentially Peter's subordinate.

Subordinate, Rivers had scoffed in his mind. Rivers' was sure that in Peter's mind, he was just a tool for Peter to use. His life was in Peter's hands, and it was all but a law because Dark Lord had decreed it.

He had no way of running.

Rivers was brought out his thoughts by a snapping of fingers in front of his face.

"Rivers? Mr. Lock?" called Bellatrix, and Rivers looked blankly at her.

"There are reports," he started, "that there is a pair of Aurors present there in that carnival today," Dark Lord's Death Eaters had a reach that his Novellus Accionites could only dream of, "both of them are muggleborns, and from what it seems, are on a date."

Bellatrix giggled, twirling her wand in locks of her hair, "Oh my~! Maybe we will play with one while the other watches."

Rivers ignored the mad woman's ramblings and continued with his plans, "Our motive today is to gain the pair's attention," he looked around the other Death Eaters. "All Azkaban ten members are here and will be entering the carnival without any disguises."

He was also part of the escapees, but he wasn't of importance and wasn't publicized as the escapees, which he was glad about.

"All of you will enter the carnival and make it look like that you're meeting in a muggle carnival, away from the wizardkind's eyes, but you're going to purposefully make yourself seen by the Aurors, so they will contact their friends back at the DMLE, and —"

"Have a party!" said Bellatrix, and there was a light on the top of her wand, thrumming with magic as wanting to rip free.

"We are not to use magic unless it's not necessary," said Rivers, "we need to keep the arriving Aurors here as long as we can, so please situate yourself near the muggles, so the Aurors won't use magic as well." He turned to the remaining Death Eaters, "All of you'll wait for my signal before doing what you were ordered to do and put the plan into motion. Be careful because we are going to be working with the place brimming

with Aurors, one mist—"

"You don't need to tell us that, kid," said Augustus Rookwood, ex-Unspeakable, and one of the Azkaban Ten. "You just make sure that your ends happen smoothly."

". . . I see," said Rivers, "well then, I have nothing more to say. It's time to start."

The twenty Death Eaters trained their eyes on the carnival, planning to set off the biggest event of the year and a starting point for a chain of events to come.

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FictionOnlyReader - Author - Finally saw Venom (Part-1) and Squid Games today. They were entertaining watches.

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If you have any ideas regarding the magic you want to see in this fiction or want to offer some ideas regarding the progression. Move onto the DISCORD Server and blast those ideas.

The link is in the bio!

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